POEMS.

BY

WILLIAM MASON, M. A.

CONTAINING,

ODES, ELEGIES, DRAMATIC PIECES, &c.

To this Dublin EDITION are added,

I. ISIS: An ELEGY.

II. An ODE performed at the *Senate-House* at *Cambridge*, at the *Installation* of his Grace the Duke of NEWCASTLE, Chancellor of the *University*.

By the same AUTHOR.

DUBLIN:

Printed for PETER WILSON, and JAMES POTTS, Booksellers, in Dame-street.

C,LXIV.

1764

Super Royal. 1830

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

ROBERT

EARL OF HOLDERNESSE,

BARON D'ARCY, MENIL AND CONYERS,

LORD LIEUTENANT

AND

CUSTOS ROTULORUM

OF THE NORTH RIDING

OF THE COUNTY OF YORK,

AND

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S

MOST HONOURABLE

PRIVY COUNCIL.

SONNET.

D'ARCY, to thee, whate'er of happier vein,
Smit with the love of Song my youth eſſay'd,
This verſe devotes from ASTON's ſecret ſhade,
Where letter'd Eaſe, thy gift, endears the ſcene.
Here, as the light-wing'd moments glide ſerene,
I weave the bower, around the tufted mead
In careleſs flow the ſimple pathway lead,
And ſtrew with many a roſe the ſhaven green.
So, to deceive my ſolitary days,
With rural toils ingenuous arts I blend,
Secure from envy, negligent of praiſe,
Yet not unknown to fame, if D'ARCY lend
His wonted ſmile to dignify my lays,
The Muſes Patron, but the Poet's Friend.

May 12, 1763.

W. MASON.

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MUSÆUS:

A

MONODY

TO THE

MEMORY of Mr. *POPE*.

IN

Imitation of MILTON's *Lycidas*.

B

Πᾶσι μὲν τοῖς ἀρχετύποις αὐτοφυής τις ἐπιπρέπει χάρις, καὶ ὥρα. Τοῖς δ' ἀπὸ τούτων κατεσκευασμένοις, κἂν ἐπ' ἄκρον μιμήσεως ἔλθωσι, πρόσεστί τι ὅμως τὸ ἐπιτετηδευμένον, καὶ οὐκ ἐκ φύσεως ὑπάρχον.

DIONYS. HALICARN. in Dinarcho.

*MUSÆUS.

A

MONODY.

SOrrowing I catch the reed, and call the muſe;
If yet a muſe on Britain's plain abide,
Since rapt MUSÆUS tun'd his parting ſtrain:
With him they liv'd, with him perchance they dy'd.
For who e'er ſince their virgin charms eſpy'd,
Or on the banks of Thames, or met their train,
Where Iſis ſparkles to the ſunny ray?
Or have they deign'd to play,
Where Camus winds along his broider'd vale,
Feeding each blue bell pale, and daiſie pied,
That fling their fragrance round his ruſhy ſide?

Yet ah! ye are not dead, Cœleſtial Maids;
Immortal as ye are, ye may not die:
Nor is it meet ye fly theſe penſive glades,
Ere round his laureate herſe ye heave the ſigh.
Stay then awhile, O ſtay, ye fleeting fair;
Reviſit yet, nor hallow'd Hippocrene,
Nor Theſpiæ's grove; till with harmonious teen
Ye ſooth his ſhade, and ſlowly-dittied air.

NOTE.

* Mr. Pope died in the year 1744; this poem was then written, and publiſhed firſt in the year 1747.

Such tribute pour'd, again ye may repair
To what lov'd haunt ye whilom did elect;
Whether Lycæus, or that mountain fair
Trim Mænalus with piny verdure deckt.
But now it boots ye not in theſe to ſtray,
Or yet Cyllene's hoary ſhade to chuſe,
Or where mild Ladon's welling waters play.
Forego each vain excuſe,
And haſte to Thames's ſhores; for Thames ſhall join
Our ſad Society, and paſſing mourn,
The tears faſt-trickling o'er his ſilver urn.
And, when the Poet's widow'd grot he laves,
His reed-crown'd locks ſhall ſhake, his head ſhall bow,
His tide no more in eddies blith ſhall rove,
But creep ſoft by with long-drawn murmurs flow.
For oft the mighty Maſter rous'd his waves
With martial notes, or [illegible] with ſtrain of love:
He muſt not now in briſk mæanders flow
Gameſome, and kiſs, the ſadly-ſilent ſhore,
Without the loan of ſome poetic woe.

Say firſt, Sicilian Muſe,
For, with thy ſiſters, thou didſt weeping ſtand
In ſilent circle at the ſolemn ſcene,
When Death approach'd, and wav'd his ebon wand,
Say how each laurel droopt its with'ring green?
How, in yon grot, each ſilver trickling ſpring
Wander'd the ſhelly channels all among;
While as the coral roof did ſoftly ring
Reſponſive to their ſweetly-doleful ſong.
Meanwhile all pale th' expiring Poet laid,
And ſunk his awful head,
While vocal ſhadows pleaſing dreams prolong;
For ſo, his ſick'ning ſpirits to releaſe,
They pour'd the balm of viſionary peace.

First,

First, ſent from Cam's fair banks, like Palmer old,
Came * Tityrus ſlow, with head all ſilver'd o'er,
And in his hand an oaken crook he bore,
And thus in antique guiſe ſhort talk did hold.
" Grete clerk of Fame' is houſe, whoſe excellence
" Maie wele befitt thilk place of eminence,
" Mickle of wele betide thy houres laſt,
" For mich good wirkè to me don and paſt.
" For ſyn the days whereas my lyre been ſtrongen,
" And deftly many a mery laie I ſongen,
" Old Time, which alle things don maliciouſly
" Gnawen with ruſty tooth continually,
" Gnattrid my lines, that they all cancrid ben,
" Till at the laſt thou ſmoothen 'hem haſt again ;
" Sithence full ſemely glidèn my rymes rude,
" As, (if fitteth thilk ſimilitude)
" Whanè ſhallow brooke runneth hobling on,
" Ovir rough ſtones it makith full rough ſong ;
" But, them ſtones removen, this lite rivere
" Stealith forth by, making pleſaunt murmere ;
" So my ſely rymes, whoſo may them note,
" Thou makiſt everichone to ren right ſote ;
" And in thy verſe entuniſt ſo fetiſely,
" That men ſayen I make trewe melody,
" And ſpeaken every dele to myne honoure.
" Mich wele, grete clerk, betide thy parting houre!"

 He

NOTE.

*Came * Tityrus* &c.] *i. e.* Chaucer, a name frequently given him by Spenſer. See *Shep. Cal.* Ecl. 2, 6, 12, and elſewhere.

He ceas'd his homely rhyme.
When * Colin Clout, Eliza's ſhepherd ſwain,
The blitheſt lad that ever pip'd on plain,
Came with his reed ſoft-warbling on the way,
And thrice he bow'd his head with motion mild,
And thus his gliding numbers gan eſſay.

I.

" † Ah! luckleſs ſwain, alas! how art thou lorn,
" Who once like me could'ſt frame thy pipe to
" play
" Shepherds deviſe, and chear the ling'ring morn:
" Ne buſh, ne breere, but learnt thy roundelay.
" Ah plight too ſore ſuch worth to equal right!
" Ah worth too high to meet ſuch piteous plight!

II.

" But I nought ſtrive, poor Colin, to compare
" My Hobbin's or my Thenot's ruſtic ſkill
" To thy deft ſwains, whoſe dapper ditties rare
" Surpaſs ought elſe of quainteſt ſhepherd's quill.
" Ev'n Roman Tityrus, that peerleſs wight,
" Mote yield to thee for dainties of delight.

" Eke

NOTE.

* *Colin Clout.*] *i. e.* Spenser, which name he gives himſelf throughout his works.

† The two firſt ſtanzas of this ſpeech, as they relate to Paſtoral, are written in the meaſure which Spenſer uſes in the firſt eclogue of the *Shepherd's Calendar*; the reſt, where he ſpeaks of Fable, are in the ſtanza of the *Faery Queen.*

III.

" Eke when in Fable's flow'ry paths you ſtray'd,
" Maſking in cunning feints truth's ſplendent face;
" Ne Sylph, ne Sylphid, but due tendance paid,
" To ſhield Belinda's lock from felon baſe,
" But all mote nought avail ſuch harm to chace.
" Then Una fair 'gan droop her princely mien,
" Eke Florimel, and all my faery race:
" Belinda far ſurpaſt my beauties ſheen,
" Belinda, ſubject meet for ſuch ſoft lay I ween.

IV.

" Like as in village troop of birdlings trim,
" Where Chanticleer his red creſt high doth hold,
" And quaking Ducks, that wont in lake to ſwim,
" And Turkeys proud, and Pigeons nothing bold;
" If chance the Peacock doth his plumes unfold,
" Eftſoons their meaner beauties all decaying,
" He gliſt'neth purple, and he gliſt'neth gold,
" Now with bright green, now blue himſelf ar-
" raying.
" Such is thy beauty bright, all other beauties ſway-
" ing.

V.

" But why do I deſcant this toyiſh rhyme,
" And fancies light in ſimple guiſe pourtray?
" Liſting to chear thee at this rueful time,
" While as black Death doth on thy heartſtrings
" prey.
" Yet rede aright, and if this friendly lay

 " Thou

" Thou nathless judgest all too slight and vain,
" Let my well meaning mend my ill essay:
" So may I greet thee with a nobler strain,
" When soon we meet for aye, in yon star-sprinkled
" plain."

Last came a bard of more majestic tread,
And * THYRSIS hight by Dryad, Faun, or Swain,
Whene'er he mingled with the shepherd train;
But seldom that; for higher thoughts he fed;
For him full oft the heav'nly Muses led
To clear Euphrates, and the secret mount,
To Araby, and Eden, fragrant climes,
All which the sacred bard would oft recount:
And thus in strain, unus'd in sylvan shade,
To sad MUSÆUS rightful homage paid.

" Thrice hail, thou heav'n-taught Warbler! last
" and best
" Of all the train! Poet, in whom conjoin'd
" All that to ear, or heart, or head, could yield
" Rapture; harmonious, manly, clear, sublime.
" Accept this gratulation: may it chear
" Thy sinking soul; nor these corporeal ills
" Ought daunt thee, or appall. Know, in high
" heav'n
" Fame blooms eternal o'er that spirit divine,
" Who builds immortal verse. There thy bold
" Muse,
Which while on earth could breathe Mæonian fire,
" Shall

NOTE.

* *Thyrsis hight.*] i. e. MILTON. *Lycidas* and the *Epitaphium Damonis* are the only Pastorals we have of Milton's; in the latter of which, where he laments *Car. Deodatus* under the name of *Damon*, he calls himself *Thyrsis*.

“ Shall ſoar ſeraphic heights ; while to her voice
“ Ten thouſand Hierarchies of Angels harp
“ Symphonious, and with dulcet harmonies
“ Utter the ſong rejoicing. I mean while,
“ To ſooth thee in theſe irkſome hours of pain,
“ Approach thy viſitant, with mortal praiſe
“ To praiſe thee mortal. Firſt, for Rhyme ſubdued ;
“ Rhyme, erſt the minſtrel of primæval Night,
“ And Chaos, Anarch old : She near their throne
“ Oft taught the rattling elements to chime
“ With tenfold din ; till late to earth upborn
“ On ſtrident plume, what time fair Poeſie
“ Emerg'd from Gothic cloud, and faintly ſhot
“ Rekindling gleams of luſtre. Her the fiend
“ Oppreſt ; forcing to utter uncouth dirge,
“ Runic, or Leonine ; and with dire chains
“ Fetter'd her ſcarce-fledg'd pinion. I ſuch bonds
“ Aim'd to deſtroy, hopeful that Art could eaſe
“ Their thraldom, and to liberal uſe convert.
“ This wonder to atchieve MUSÆUS came ;
“ Thou cam'ſt, and at thy magic touch the chains
“ Off dropt, and (paſſing ſtrange!) ſoft-wreathed
“ bands
“ Of flow'rs their place ſupply'd : which well the
“ Muſe
“ Might wear for choice, not force ; obſtruction
“ none,
“ But lov'lieſt ornament. Wond'rous this, yet here
“ The wonder reſts not ; various argument
“ Remains for me, uncertain, where to cull
“ The leading grace, where countleſs graces charm.
“ Various this peaceful cave ; this mineral roof ;
“ This 'ſemblage meet of coral, ore, and ſhell ;
“ Theſe pointed cryſtals thro' the ſhadowy clefts

" Bright gliſt'ring; all theſe ſlowly dripping rills
" That tinkling wander o'er the pebbled floor:
" Yet not this various peaceful cave, with this
" Its mineral roof; nor this aſſemblage meet
" Of coral, ore, and ſhell; nor mid the ſhade
" Theſe pointed cryſtals, gliſt'ring fair; nor rills.
" That wander tinkling o'er the pebbled floor
" Deal charms more various to each raptur'd ſenſe,
" Than thy mellifluous lay ———"

" Ceaſe, friendly ſwain;
(MUSÆUS cry'd, and rais'd his aching head)
" ALL PRAISE IS FOREIGN, BUT OF TRUE DESERT,
" PLAYS ROUND THE HEAD, BUT COMES NOT TO
" THE HEART.
" Ah! why recall the toys of thoughtleſs youth?
" When flow'ry fiction held the place of truth?
" Ere ſound to ſenſe reſign'd the ſilken rein,
" And the light lay was muſically vain.
" O! in that lay had richeſt fancy flow'd;
" The ſyrens warbled, and the graces glow'd
" Had livelieſt nature, happieſt art combin'd;
" That lent each charm, and this each charm refin'd,
" Alas! how little were my proudeſt boaſt!
" The ſweeteſt trifler of my tribe at moſt.

" To ſway the judgment while he ſooths the ear;
" To curb mad paſſion in its wild career;
" To wake by ſober touch the uſeful lyre,
" And rule with reaſon's rigour, fancy's fire:
" Be this the poet's praiſe. And this poſſeſt,
" Take, Dulneſs and thy dunces! take the reſt.

" Come then that honeſt fame; whoſe temp'rate
" ray
" Or gilds the ſatire, or the moral lay;

" Which

"Which dawns, tho' thou, rough Donne! hew out
"the line:
"But beams, ſage Horace! from each ſtrain of
"thine.
"O if like theſe, with conſcious Freedom bold,
"One Poet more his manly meaſures roll'd
"Like theſe led forth th' indignant Muſe to brave
"The venal ſtateſman, and the titled ſlave;
"To ſtrip from frontleſs Vice her ſtars and ſtrings,
"Nor ſpare her baſking in the ſmile of Kings:
"If grave, yet lively; rational, yet warm;
"Clear to convince and eloquent to charm:
"He pour'd, for Virtue's cauſe ſerene along
"The pureſt precept, in the ſweeteſt ſong:
"If, for her cauſe, his heav'n-directed plan
"Mark'd each meander in the maze of man;
"Unmov'd by ſophiſtry, unaw'd by name,
"No dupe to doctrines, and no fool to fame;
"Led by no ſyſtem's devious glare aſtray,
"That meteor-like, but glitters to betray.
"Yes, if his ſoul to reaſon's rule reſign'd,
"And heav'n's own views fair-op'ning on his mind,
"Caught from bright nature's flame the living ray,
"Thro' paſſion's cloud pour'd in reſiſtleſs day;
"And taught Mankind in reas'ning Pride's deſpite,
"That God is wise, and all that is is right:
"If this his boaſt, pour here the welcome lays;
"Praiſe leſs than this is mockery of praiſe."

"To pour that praiſe be mine," fair Virtue cry'd,
And ſhot, all radiant, thro' an op'ning cloud.
But ah! my Muſe, how will thy voice expreſs
Th' immortal ſtrain, harmonious, as it flow'd?
Ill ſuits immortal ſtrain a doric dreſs:
And far too high already haſt thou ſoar'd.

Enough

Enough for thee, that when the lay was o'er,
The goddeſs claſp'd him to her throbbing breaſt:
But what might that avail? Blind Fate before
Had op'd her ſhears, to cut his vital thread;
And who may dare gainſay her ſtern beheſt?
Now thrice he wav'd the hand, thrice bow'd the head,
And ſigh'd his ſoul to reſt.

Now wept the Nymphs; witneſs ye waving ſhades!
Witneſs, ye winding ſtreams! the Nymphs did weep:
The heav'nly Goddeſs too with tears did ſteep
Her plaintive voice, that echo'd thro' the glades,
And, "cruel gods," and, "cruel ſtars," ſhe cry'd:
Nor did the ſhepherds, thro' the woodlands wide,
On that ſad day, or to the penſive brook,
Or ſilent river, drive their thirſty flocks:
Nor did the wild-goat brouze the ſhrubby rocks:
And Philomel her cuſtom'd oak forſook:
And roſes wan were wav'd by zephyrs weak,
As Nature's ſelf was ſick:
And every lily droop'd its ſilver head.
Sad ſympathy! yet ſure his rightful meed,
Who charm'd all nature: well might Nature mourn
Thro' all her choiceſt ſweets MUSÆUS dead.

Here

IMITATION.

Then wept the Nymphs, &c.]
Extinctum Nymphæ crudeli funere Daphnim
Flebant: vos coryli teſtes & flumina Nymphis,
Cum, complexa ſui corpus miſerabile nati,
Atque deos atque aſtra vocat crudelia Mater.
Non ulli paſtos illis egêre diebus
Frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina; nulla neque amnem
Libavit quadrupes, nec graminis attigit herbam.

VIRG. Ecl. 5.

Here end we, Goddeſs! this your ſhepherd ſang,
All as his hands an ivy chaplet wove.
O! make it worthy of the ſacred Bard;
And make it equal to the ſhepherd's love.
Thou to accept the ſtrain with meet regard:
For ſure, bleſt Shade, thou hear'ſt my doleful ſong;
Whether with angel troops, the ſtars among,
From golden harp thou call'ſt ſeraphic lays;
Or, for fair Virtue's cauſe, now doubly dear,
Thou ſtill art hov'ring o'er our tuneleſs ſphere;
And mov'ſt ſome hidden ſpring her weal to raiſe.
Thus the fond ſwain his doric oat eſſay'd,
Manhood's prime honours riſing on his cheek:
Trembling he ſtrove to court the tuneful maid
With ſtripling arts, and dalliance all too weak,
Unſeen, unheard, beneath an hawthorn ſhade.
But now dun clouds the welkin 'gan to ſtreak:
And now down-dropt the larks, and ceas'd their ſtrain:
They ceas'd, and with them ceas'd the ſhepherd ſwain.

IMITATION.

Here end we, Goddeſs! &c.]
Hæc ſat erit Divæ veſtrum ceciniſſe Poetam,
Dum ſedet, et gracili fiſcellam texit hibiſco,
Pierides vos hæc facietis maxima Gallo:
Gallo cujus amor, *&c.* VIRG. EC. 10.

ODES.

O D E I.

To M E M O R Y.

I.

* MOTHER OF WISDOM! thou, whoſe ſway
The throng'd ideal hoſt obey;
Who bid'ſt their ranks, now vaniſh, now appear,
Flame in the van, or darken in the rear;
Accept this votive verſe. Thy reign
Nor place can fix, nor power reſtrain.
All, all is thine. For thee the ear, and eye
Rove thro' the realms of Grace, and Harmony:
The Senſes thee ſpontaneous ſerve,
That wake, and thrill thro' ev'ry nerve.
Elſe vainly ſoft, lov'd Philomel! would flow
The ſoothing ſadneſs of thy warbled woe:
Elſe vainly ſweet yon woodbine ſhade
With clouds of fragrance fill the glade;
Vainly, the cygnet ſpread her downy plume,
The vine guſh nectar, and the virgin bloom.
But ſwift to thee, alive, and warm,
Devolves each tributary charm:
See modeſt Nature bring her ſimple ſtores,
Luxuriant Art exhauſt her plaſtic powers;

While

NOTE.

* According to a fragment of Afranius, who makes Experience and Memory the parents of Wiſdom.

Uſus me genuit, Mater peperit MEMORIA,
ΣΟΦΙΑΝ *vocant me Graii, vos* SAPIENTIAM.

The paſſage is preſerved by Aulus Gellius, lib. xiii. cap. 8.

While every flower in Fancy's clime,
Each gem of old heroic Time,
Cull'd by the hand of the induſtrious Muſe,
Around thy ſhrine their blended beams diffuſe.

II.

Hail, MEM'RY! hail. Behold, I lead
To that high ſhrine the ſacred Maid:
Thy daughter ſhe, the Empreſs of the lyre,
The firſt, the faireſt, of Aonia's quire.
She comes, and lo, thy realms expand!
She takes her delegated ſtand
Full in the midſt, and o'er thy num'rous train
Diſplays the awful wonders of her reign.
There thron'd ſupreme in native ſtate,
If Sirius flame with fainting heat,
She calls; ideal groves their ſhade extend,
The cool gale breathes, the ſilent ſhow'rs deſcend.
Or, if bleak Winter, frowning round,
Diſrobe the trees, and chill the ground,
She, mild Magician, waves her potent wand,
And ready Summers wake at her command.
See, viſionary Suns ariſe,
Thro' ſilver clouds, and azure ſkies;
See, ſportive Zephyrs fan the criſped ſtreams;
Thro' ſhadowy brakes light glance the ſparkling beams:
While, near the ſecret moſs-grown cave,
That ſtands beſide the chryſtal wave,
Sweet Echo, riſing from her rocky bed,
Mimics the feather'd Chorus o'er her head.

III.

Riſe, hallow'd MILTON! riſe, and ſay,
How, at thy gloomy cloſe of day;

How "when depreſt by Age, beſet with wrongs;"
When "fall'n on evil days and evil tongues;"
When Darkneſs, brooding on thy ſight,
Exil'd the ſov'reign lamp of light;
Say, what could then one chearing hope diffuſe?
What friends were thine, ſave Mem'ry and the Muſe?
Hence the rich ſpoils, thy ſtudious Youth
Caught from the ſtores of antient Truth:
Hence all thy claſſic wandrings could explore,
When Rapture led thee to the Latian ſhore;
Each Scene, that Tiber's bank ſupply'd;
Each Grace, that play'd on Arno's ſide;
The tepid Gales, thro' Tuſcan glades that fly;
The blue Serene, that ſpreads Heſperia's ſky;
Were ſtill thine own: thy ample Mind
Each charm receiv'd, retain'd, combin'd.
And thence "the nightly Viſitant," that came
To touch thy boſom with her ſacred flame,
Recall'd the long-loſt beams of grace,
That whilom ſhot from Nature's face,
When GOD, in Eden, o'er her youthful breaſt
Spread with his own right hand Perfection's gorgeous veſt.

ODE II.

* *To a WATER NYMPH.*

YE green hair'd Nymphs, whom Pan's de-
crees
Have giv'n to guard this ſolemn † wood,
To ſpeed the ſhooting ſcions into trees,
And call the roſeate bloſſom from the bud,
Attend. But chief, thou Naiad, wont to lead
This fluid chryſtal ſparkling as it flows,
Whither, ah, whither art thou fled?
What ſhade is conſcious to thy woes?
Ah, 'tis yon' Poplar's awful gloom:
Poetic eyes can pierce the ſcene;
Can ſee thy drooping head, thy withering bloom;
See grief diffus'd o'er all thy languid mien.
Well may'ſt thou wear misfortune's fainting air;
Well rend thoſe flow'ry honours from thy brow;
Devolve that length of careleſs hair;
And give thine azure veil to flow
Looſe to the wind: for, oh, thy pain
The pitying Muſe can well relate:
That pitying Muſe ſhall breathe her tend'reſt ſtrain,
To teach the echoes thy diſaſtrous fate.

'Twas,

NOTES.

* This Ode was written in the year 1747, and publiſhed in the firſt Volume of Mr Dodſley's Miſcellany. It is here revis'd throughout, and concluded according to the Author's original idea.

† A ſeat near ** finely ſituated, with a great command of water; but diſpoſed in a very falſe taſte.

'Twas, where yon Beech's crouding branches clos'd,
What time the Dog-ſtar's flames intenſely burn,
In gentle indolence compos'd,
Reclin'd upon thy trickling urn,
Slumb'ring thou lay'ſt, all free from fears;
No friendly dream foretold thine harm;
When ſudden, ſee, the tyrant Art appears,
To ſnatch the liquid treaſures from thine arm.
Art, gothic Art, has ſeiz'd the darling vaſe:
That vaſe which ſilver-ſlipper'd Thetis gave,
For ſome ſoft ſtory told with grace,
Among th' aſſociates of the wave;
When, in ſequeſter'd coral vales,
While worlds of waters roll'd above,
The circling ſea-nymphs told alternate tales
Of fabled changes, and of ſlighted love.
Ah! loſs too juſtly mourn'd; for now the Fiend
Has on yon ſhell-wrought terras pois'd it high;
And thence he bids its ſtreams deſcend,
With torturing regularity.
From ſtep to ſtep, with ſullen ſound,
The forc'd caſcades indignant leap;
Now ſinking fill the baſon's meaſur'd round;
There in a dull ſtagnation doom'd to ſleep.
Where now the vocal pebbles gurgling ſong?
The rill ſlow-dripping from his rocky ſpring?
What free meander winds along,
Or curls when Zephyr waves his wing?
Alas, theſe glories are no more:
Fortune, O give me to redeem
The raviſh'd vaſe; O give me to reſtore
Its ancient honours to this hapleſs ſtream.

Then, Nymph, again, with all their wonted ease,
Thy wanton waters, volatile and free,
Shall wildly warble, as they please,
Their soft, loquacious harmony.
Where Thou and Nature bid them rove,
There will I gently aid their way;
Whether to darken in the shadowy grove,
Or, in the mead, reflect the dancing ray.
For thee too, Goddess, o'er that hallow'd spot,
Were first thy fount of chrystal bubbles bright,
These hands shall arch a rustic grot,
Impervious to the garish light.
I'll not demand of Ocean's pride
To bring his coral spoils from far:
Nor will I delve yon yawning mountain's side,
For latent minerals rough, or polish'd spar:
But antique roots, with ivy dark o'ergrown,
Steep'd in the bosom of thy chilly lake,
Thy touch shall turn to living stone;
And these the simple roof shall deck.
Yet grant one melancholy boon:
Grant that, at evening's sober hour,
Led by the lustre of the rising moon,
My step may frequent tread thy pebbled floor.
There, if perchance I wake the love lorn theme,
In melting accents querulously flow,
Kind Naiad, let thy pitying stream
With wailing notes accordant flow:
So shalt thou sooth his heaving heart,
That mourns a faithful Virgin lost;
So shall thy murmurs, and my sighs impart
Some share of pensive pleasure to her ghost.

ODE III.

To an ÆOLUS's HARP.*

Sent to Miſs SHEPHEARD.

YES, magic Lyre! now all complete
Thy ſlender frame reſponſive rings;
While kindred notes, with undulation ſweet,
Accordant wake from all thy vocal ſtrings.
Go then to her, whoſe ſoft requeſt
Bad my bleſt hands thy form prepare:
Ah go, and ſweetly ſooth her tender breaſt
With many a warble wild, and artleſs air.
For know, full oft, while o'er the mead
Bright June extends her fragrant reign,
The ſlumb'ring Fair ſhall place thee near her head,
To court the gales that cool the ſultry plain.
Then ſhall the Sylphs, and Sylphides bright,
Mild Genii all, to whoſe high care
Her virgin charms are giv'n, in circling flight
Skim ſportive round thee in the fields of air.

Some,

NOTES.

* This inſtrument was firſt invented by Kircher about the year 1649. See his *Muſurgia Univerſalis ſive ars conſoni & diſſoni*, lib. ix. After having been neglected above a hundred years it was again accidentally diſcovered by Mr. Oſwald.

Some, flutt'ring thro' thy trembling ſtrings,
Shall catch the rich melodious ſpoil,
And lightly bruſh thee with their purpled wings
To aid the Zephyrs in their tuneful toil;
While others check each ruder gale,
Expel rough Boreas from the ſky,
Nor let a breeze its heaving breath exhale,
Save ſuch as ſoftly pant, and panting die.
Then, as thy ſwelling accents riſe,
Fair Fancy, waking at the ſound,
Shall paint bright viſions on her raptur'd eyes,
And waft her ſpirits to enchanted ground;
To myrtle groves, Elyſian greens,
In which ſome fav'rite Youth ſhall rove,
And meet, and lead her thro' the glittering ſcenes,
And all be Muſic, Extacy, and Love.

O D E IV.

To INDEPENDENCY.

I.

HERE, on my native ſhore reclin'd,
While Silence rules this midnight hour,
I woo thee, GODDESS. On my muſing mind
Deſcend, propitious Power!
And bid theſe ruffling gales of grief ſubſide:
Bid my calm'd ſoul with all thy influence ſhine;
As yon chaſte Orb along this ample tide
Draws the long luſtre of her ſilver line,
While the huſh'd breeze its laſt weak whiſper blows,
And lulls old HUMBER to his deep repoſe.

II.

Come to thy Vot'ry's ardent prayer,
In all thy graceful plainneſs dreſt:
No knot confines thy waving hair,
No zone thy floating veſt;
Unſullied Honour decks thine open brow,
And Candour brightens in thy modeſt eye:
Thy bluſh is warm Content's etherial glow;
Thy ſmile is Peace; thy ſtep is Liberty:
Thou ſcatter'ſt bleſſings round with laviſh hand,
As Spring with careleſs fragrance fills the land.

III.

As now o'er this lone beach I ſtray,
* Thy fav'rite Swain oft ſtole along,
And artleſs wove his Dorian lay,
Far from the buſy throng.
Thou heard'ſt him, Goddeſs, ſtrike the tender ſtring,
And bad'ſt his ſoul with bolder paſſions move:
Soon theſe reſponſive ſhores forgot to ring,
With Beauty's praiſe, or plaint of ſlighted Love;
To loftier flights his daring Genius roſe,
And led the war, 'gainſt thine, and Freedom's foes.

IV.

Pointed with Satire's keeneſt ſteel,
The ſhafts of Wit he darts around;
Ev'n † mitred Dulneſs learns to feel,
And ſhrinks beneath the wound.
In awful poverty his honeſt Muſe
Walks forth vindictive thro' a venal land:
In vain Corruption ſheds her golden dews,
In vain Oppreſſion lifts her iron hand;
He ſcorns them both, and, arm'd with truth alone,
Bids Luſt and Folly tremble on the throne.

V.

Behold, like him, immortal Maid,
The Muſes' veſtal fires I bring:
Here, at thy feet, the ſparks I ſpread;
Propitious wave thy wing.

And

NOTE.

* Andrew Marvell, born at Kingſton upon Hull in the year 1620.

† See *The Rehearſal tranſpoſed*, and an account of the effect of that ſatire in the Biographia Britannica, art. *Marvell.*

And fan them to that dazzling blaze of Song,
Which glares tremendous on the Sons of Pride.
But, hark, methinks I hear her hallow'd tongue?
In diſtant trills it echoes o'er the tide;
Now meets mine ear with warbles wildly free,
As ſwells the Lark's meridian ecſtacy.

VI.

" Fond Youth! to MARVELL's patriot fame,
" Thy humble breaſt muſt ne'er aſpire.
" Yet nouriſh ſtill the lambent flame;
" Still ſtrike thy blameleſs Lyre:
" Led by the moral Muſe, ſecurely rove;
" And all the vernal ſweets thy vacant Youth
" Can cull from buſy Fancy's fairy grove,
" O hang their foliage round the fane of Truth:
" To arts like theſe devote thy tuneful toil,
" And meet its fair reward in D'ARCY's ſmile.

VII.

" 'Tis he, my Son, alone ſhall chear
" Thy ſickning ſoul at that ſad hour,
" When o'er a much-lov'd Parent's bier,
" Thy duteous Sorrows ſhower:
" At that ſad hour, when all thy hopes decline;
" When pining Care leads on her pallid train,
" And ſees thee, like the weak, and widow'd Vine,
" Winding thy blaſted tendrils o'er the plain.
" At that ſad hour ſhall D'ARCY lend his aid,
" And raiſe with Friendſhip's arm thy drooping head.

VIII.

" This fragrant wreath, the Muses meed,
" That bloom'd those vocal shades among,
" Where never Flatt'ry dar'd to tread,
" Or Interest's servile throng;
" Receive, thou favour'd Son, at my command,
" And keep, with sacred care, for D'Arcy's brow:
" Tell him, 'twas wove by my immortal hand,
" I breath'd on every flower a purer glow;
" Say, for thy sake, I send the gift divine
" To him, who calls thee HIS, yet makes thee MINE."

O D E V.

To a FRIEND.

I.

AH! ceaſe this kind perſuaſive ſtrain,
Which, when it flows from Friendſhip's tongue,
However weak, however vain,
O'erpowers beyond the Siren's ſong:
Leave me, my friend, indulgent go,
And let me muſe upon my woe.
Why lure me from theſe pale retreats?
Why rob me of theſe penſive ſweets?
Can Muſick's voice, can Beauty's eye,
Can Painting's glowing hand ſupply
A charm ſo ſuited to my mind,
As blows this hollow guſt of wind,
As drops this little weeping rill
Soft tinkling down the moſs grown hill,
While thro' the weſt where ſinks the crimſon Day,
Meek Twilight ſlowly ſails, and waves her banners grey?

II.

Say, from affliction's various ſource
Do none but turbid waters flow?
And cannot Fancy clear their courſe?
For Fancy is the Friend of Woe.

Say, mid that grove, in love-lorn ſtate,
While yon poor Ringdove mourns her mate,
Is all, that meets the ſhepherd's ear,
Inſpir'd by anguiſh and deſpair?
Ah! no; fair Fancy rules the Song:
She ſwells her throat; ſhe guides her tongue;
She bids the waving Aſpin ſpray
Quiver in cadence to her lay;
She bids the fringed Oſiers bow,
And ruſtle round the lake below,
To ſuit the tenor of her gurgling ſighs,
And ſooth her throbbing breaſt with ſolemn ſympathies.

III.

To thee, whoſe young and poliſh'd brow
The wrinkling hand of Sorrow ſpares;
Whoſe cheeks, beſtrew'd with roſes, know
No channel for the tide of tears;
To thee yon Abbey dank, and lone,
Where ivy chains each mould'ring ſtone
That nods o'er many a Martyr's tomb,
May caſt a formidable gloom.
Yet Some there are, who free from fear,
Could wander thro' the cloyſters drear,
Could rove each deſolated Iſle,
Tho' midnight thunders ſhook the pile;
And dauntleſs view, or ſeem to view,
(As faintly flaſh the lightnings blue)
Thin ſhiv'ring Ghoſts from yawning charnels throng,
And glance with ſilent ſweep the ſhaggy vaults along.

But

IV.

But ſuch terrific charms as theſe,
I aſk not yet: My ſober mind
The fainter forms of ſadneſs pleaſe;
My ſorrows are of ſofter kind.
'Thro' this ſtill valley let me ſtray,
Rapt in ſome ſtrain of penſive GRAY:
Whoſe lofty Genius bears along
The conſcious dignity of Song;
And, ſcorning from the ſacred ſtore,
To waſte a note on Pride or Power,
Roves thro' the glimmering, twilight gloom,
And warbles round each ruſtic tomb:
He, too, perchance, (for well I know,
His heart can melt with friendly woe)
He, too, perchance, when theſe poor limbs are laid,
Will heave one tuneful ſigh, and ſooth my hov'ring
Shade.

ODE VI.

* *On the Fate of* TYRANNY.

I. 1.

OPPRESSION dies: the Tyrant falls:
The golden City bows her walls!
JEHOVAH breaks th' Avenger's rod.
The Son of Wrath, whoſe ruthleſs hand
Hurl'd Deſolation o'er the land,
Has run his raging race, has cloſ'd the ſcene of blood.
Chiefs arm'd around behold their vanquiſh'd Lord;
Nor ſpread the guardian ſhield, nor lift the loyal ſword.

I. 2.

He falls; and Earth again is free.
Hark! at the call of Liberty,

All

NOTE.

* This ode is a free paraphraſe of Part of the 14th chapter of Iſaiah, where the Prophet, after he has foretold the deſtruction of Babylon, ſubjoins a Song of Triumph, which, he ſuppoſes, the Jews will ſing when his prediction is fulfilled. "*And it ſhall come to paſs in the day that the Lord ſhall give thee "reſt from thy ſorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard "bondage wherein thou waſt made to ſerve, that thou ſhall take "up this proverb againſt the King of Babylon, and ſay,* "How *hath the oppreſſor ceaſed,* &c.

1ſt Strophe, ver. 4, 5, 6.

All Nature lifts the choral ſong.
The Fir trees on the mountain's head,
Rejoice thro' all their pomp of ſhade;
The lordly Cedars nod on ſacred Lebanon:
Tyrant! they cry, ſince thy fell force is broke,
Our proud heads pierce the ſkies, nor fear the woodman's ſtroke.

I. 3.

Hell, from her gulph profound,
Rouſes at thine approach; and, all around,
Her dreadful notes of preparation ſound.
See, at the awful call,
Her ſhadowy Heroes all,
Ev'n mighty Kings, the heirs of empire wide,
Riſing, with ſolemn ſtate, and ſlow,
From their ſable thrones below,
Meet, and inſult thy pride.
What, doſt thou join our ghoſtly train,
A flitting ſhadow light, and vain?
Where is thy pomp, thy feſtive throng,
Thy revel dance, and wanton ſong?
Proud King! Corruption faſtens on thy breaſt;
And calls her crawling brood, and bids them ſhare the feaſt.

II. 1.

O Lucifer! thou radiant ſtar;
Son of the Morn; whoſe roſy car

REFERENCES.

1ſt Antiſtrophe, *the whole Earth is at reſt*, &c. ver. 7, 8.
1ſt Epode, *Hell from beneath is moved for thee*, &c. ver. 9, 10, 11.

Flam'd foremoſt in the van of day:
How art thou fall'n, thou King of Light!
How fall'n from thy meridian height!
Who ſaid'ſt the diſtant poles ſhall hear me, and obey.
High, o'er the ſtars my ſapphire throne ſhall glow,
And, as JEHOVAH's ſelf, my voice the heav'ns ſhall bow.

II. 2.

He ſpake, he died. Diſtain'd with gore,
Beſide yon yawning cavern hoar,
See, where his livid corſe is laid.
The aged Pilgrim paſſing by,
Surveys him long with dubious eye;
And muſes on his fate, and ſhakes his reverend head.
Juſt heav'ns! is thus thy pride imperial gone?
Is this poor heap of duſt the King of Babylon?

II. 3.

Is this the Man, whoſe nod
Made the Earth tremble: whoſe terrific rod
Levell'd her loftieſt cities? Where he trod,
Famine purſu'd and frown'd;
'Till Nature groaning round,
Saw her rich realms transform'd to deſarts dry;
While at his crouded priſon's gate,
Graſping the keys of Fate,
Stood ſtern Captivity.

Vain.

REFERENCES.

2d Strophe, *How art thou fallen from Heaven*, &c. ver. 12, 13, 14.

2d Antiſtrophe, *Yet thou ſhalt be brought down to Hell*, &c. ver. 15, 16.

2d Epode, *Is this the man that made the Earth tremble*, &c. ver. 16, 17, 18, 19.

Vain Man! behold thy righteous doom;
Behold each neighb'ring monarch's tomb;
The trophied arch, the breathing bust,
The laurel shades their sacred dust:
While thou, vile Out-cast, on this hostile plain,
Moulder'st, a vulgar corse, among the vulgar slain.

III. 1.

No trophied arch, no breathing bust,
Shall dignify thy trampled dust:
No laurel flourish o'er thy grave.
For why, proud King, thy ruthless hand
Hurl'd Desolation o'er the land,
And crush'd the subject race, whom Kings are born to save:
Eternal Infamy shall blast thy name,
And all thy sons shall share their impious Father's shame.

III. 2.

Rise, purple Slaughter! furious rise;
Unfold the terror of thine eyes;
Dart thy vindictive shafts around
Let no strange land a shade afford,
No conquer'd Nations call them Lord;
Nor let their cities rise to curse the goodly ground.
For thus JEHOVAH swears; no Name, no Son,
No remnant, shall remain of haughty Babylon.

REFERENCES.

3d Strophe, *thou shalt not be joined to them in Burial, &c.* ver. 20.

3d Antistrophe, *prepare Slaughter for his Children*, ver. 21, 22——

III. 3.

Thus ſaith the righteous Lord:
My Vengeance ſhall unſheath the flaming ſword;
O'er all thy realms my Fury ſhall be pour'd.
Where yon proud city ſtood,
I'll ſpread the ſtagnant flood;
And there the Bittern in the ſedge ſhall lurk,
Moaning with ſullen ſtrain:
While, ſweeping o'er the plain,
Deſtruction ends her work.
Yes, on mine holy mountain's brow,
I'll cruſh this proud Aſſyrian foe.
Th' irrevocable word is ſpoke.
From Judah's neck the galling yoke,
Spontaneous falls, ſhe ſhines with wonted ſtate;
Thus by MYSELF I ſwear, and what I ſwear is Fate.

REFERENCES.

3d Epode, *ſaith the Lord, I will alſo make it a poſſeſſion for the Bittern*, &c. ver.—22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

ELEGIES.

E L E G Y I.

To a YOUNG NOBLEMAN Leaving the Univerſity.

ERE yet, ingenuous Youth, thy ſteps retire
From Cam's ſmooth margin, and the peaceful vale,
Where Science call'd thee to her ſtudious quire,
And met thee muſing in her Cloyſters pale;
O! let thy friend (and may he boaſt the name)
Breathe from his artleſs reed one parting lay;
A lay like this thy early Virtues claim,
And this let voluntary Friendſhip pay.
Yet know, the time arrives, the dangerous time,
When all thoſe Virtues, opening now ſo fair,
Tranſplanted to the world's tempeſtuous clime,
Muſt learn each Paſſion's boiſt'rous breath to bear.
There, if Ambition peſtilent and pale,
Or Luxury ſhould taint their vernal glow;
If cold Self-intereſt, with her chilling gale,
Should blaſt th' unfolding bloſſoms ere they blow;
If mimic hues, by Art, or Faſhion ſpread,
Their genuine, ſimple colouring ſhould ſupply,
O! with them may theſe laureate honors fade;
And with them (if it can) my Friendſhip die.

Then do not blame, if, tho' thyself inspire,
  Cautious I strike the panegyric string;
The Muse full oft pursues a meteor fire,
  And vainly vent'rous, soars on waxen wing.
Too actively awake at Friendship's voice,
  The Poet's bosom pours the fervent strain,
Till sad Reflexion blames the hasty choice,
  And oft invokes Oblivion's aid in vain.
Call we the shade of POPE, from that blest bower
  Where thron'd he sits with many a tuneful Sage;
Ask, if he ne'er bemoans that hapless hour
  When ST. JOHN's name * illumin'd Glory's page?
Ask, if the wretch, who dar'd his mem'ry stain,
  Ask, if his country's, his religion's foe
Deserv'd the meed that MARLBRO' fail'd to gain,
  The deathless meed, he only could bestow?
The Bard will tell thee, the misguided praise
  Clouds the cœlestial sunshine of his breast;
Ev'n now, repentant of his erring Lays,
  He heaves a sigh amid the realms of rest.
If POPE thro' friendship fail'd, indignant view,
  Yet pity DRYDEN; hark, whene'er he sings,
How Adulation drops her courtly dew
  On titled Rhymers, and inglorious Kings.
See, from the depths of his exhausted mine,
  His glittering stores the tuneful Spendthrift throws;
Where Fear, or Interest bids, behold they shine;
  Now grace a CROMWELL's, now a CHARLES's brows.

Born

NOTE.

* Alluding to this couplet of Mr. POPE's
To CATO VIRGIL paid one honest line,
O let my Country's friend *illumine* mine.

Born with too generous, or too mean a heart,
  Dryden! in vain to thee thoſe ſtores were lent:
Thy ſweeteſt numbers but a trifling Art;
  Thy ſtrongeſt diction idly eloquent.
The ſimpleſt Lyre, if Truth directs its Lays,
  Warbles a melody ne'er heard from thine:
Not to diſguſt with falſe, or venal praiſe,
  Was Parnell's modeſt fame, and may be mine.
Go then, my Friend, nor let thy candid breaſt
  Condemn me, if I check the plauſive ſtring;
Go to the wayward world, compleat the reſt;
  Be, what the pureſt Muſe would wiſh to ſing.
Be ſtill thyſelf; that open path of Truth,
  Which led thee here, let Manhood firm purſue;
Retain the ſweet ſimplicity of Youth,
  And, all thy virtue dictates, dare to do.
Still ſcorn, with conſcious pride, the maſk of Art;
  On vice's front let fearful caution low'r,
And teach the diffident, diſcreeter part,
  Of knaves that plot, and fools that fawn for Power.
So, round thy brow when Age's honours ſpread,
  When Death's cold hand unſtrings thy Mason's
      lyre,
When the green turf lies lightly on his head,
  Thy worth ſhall ſome ſuperior bard inſpire:
He, to the ampleſt bounds of Time's domain,
  On Rapture's plume ſhall give thy Name to fly;
For truſt, with reverence truſt this * Sabine ſtrain:
  "The Muſe forbids the virtuous Man to die."

Written in 1753.

NOTE.

* —Dignum laude Virum,
Muſa vetat mori. Horace.

ELEGY II.

Written in the GARDEN of a FRIEND.

WHILE o'er my head this laurel-woven bower
Its arch of glittering verdure wildly flings,
Can Fancy ſlumber? can the tuneful Power,
That rules my lyre, neglect her wonted ſtrings?
No; if the blighting Eaſt deform the plain,
If this gay bank no balmy ſweets exhal'd,
Still ſhould the grove re-echo to my ſtrain,
And friendſhip prompt the theme, where beauty fail'd.
For he, whoſe careleſs art this foliage dreſt,
Who bade theſe twiſting braids of woodbine bend,
He firſt, when truth and virtue, taught my breaſt
Where beſt to chuſe, and beſt to fix a friend.
How well does Mem'ry note the golden day,
What time, reclin'd in Marg'ret's ſtudious glade,
My mimic reed firſt tun'd the * Dorian Lay,
"Unſeen, unheard, beneath an hawthorn ſhade?"

'Twas

NOTE.

* MUSÆUS, the firſt Poem in this Collection, written while the Author was a Scholar of St. John's College in Cambridge. See page 13.

'Twas there we met; the Muſes hail'd the hour;
 The ſame deſires, the ſame ingenuous arts
Inſpir'd us both; we own'd, and bleſt the power
 That join'd at once, our ſtudies and our hearts.
O! ſince thoſe days, when Science ſpread the feaſt,
 When emulative Youth its reliſh lent,
Say, has one genuine Joy e'er warm'd my breaſt?
 Enough; if Joy was his, be mine Content.
To thirſt for praiſe his temperate youth forbore;
 He fondly wiſh'd not for a Poet's name;
Much did he love the Muſe, but Quiet more,
 And, tho' he might command, he ſlighted Fame.
Hither, in manhood's prime, he wiſely fled
 From all that Folly, all that Pride approves;
To this ſoft ſcene a tender Partner led;
 This laurel ſhade was witneſs to their loves.
" Begone," he cry'd, " Ambition's air-drawn plan;
 " Hence with perplexing pomp, unwieldy wealth:
" Let me not ſeem, but be the happy man,
 " Poſſeſt of Love, of Competence, and Health."
Smiling he ſpake, nor did the Fates withſtand;
 In rural arts the peaceful moments flew:
Say, lovely Lawn! that felt his forming hand,
 How ſoon thy ſurface ſhone with verdure new,
How ſoon obedient FLORA brought her ſtore,
 And o'er thy breaſt a ſhower of fragrance flung:
VERTUMNUS came; his earlieſt blooms he bore,
 And thy rich ſides with waving purple hung:
Then to the ſight, he call'd yon ſtately ſpire,
 He pierc'd th'oppoſing oak's luxuriant ſhade;
Bad yonder crouding hawthorns low retire,
 Nor veil the glories of the golden mead.

Hail,

Hail, ſylvan wonders, hail; and hail the hand,
Whoſe native taſte thy native charms diſplay'd,
And taught one little acre to command
Each envied happineſs of ſcene, and ſhade.
Is there a hill, whoſe diſtant azure bounds
The ample range of Scarſdale's proud domain,
A mountain hoar, that yon wild Peak ſurrounds,
But lends a willing beauty to thy plain?
And, lo! in yonder path I ſpy my friend;
He looks the guardian genius of the grove,
Mild as * the fabled Form that whilom deign'd,
At MILTON's call, in Harefield's haunts to rove.
Bleſt Spirit, come! tho' pent in mortal mould,
I'll yet invoke thee by that purer name;
O come, a Portion of thy bliſs unfold,
From Folly's maze, my wayward ſtep reclaim.
Too long, alas, my inexperienc'd youth,
Miſled by flattering Fortune's ſpecious tale,
Has left the rural reign of Peace, and Truth,
The huddling brook, cool cave, and whiſpering vale.
Won to the world, a candidate for praiſe,
Yet, let me boaſt, by no ignoble art,
Too oft the public ear has heard my lays,
Too much its vain applauſe has touch'd my heart;
But

NOTE.

* See the Deſcription of the Genius of the Wood, in MILTON's Arcades.

For know, by lot, from Jove, I am the Power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower;
To nurſe the Saplings tall, and curl the grove
With ringlets quaint, &c.

But now, ere Cuſtom binds his powerful chains,
Come, from the baſe enchanter ſet me free,
While yet my ſoul its firſt, beſt taſte retains,
Recall that ſoul to reaſon, peace, and thee.
Teach me, like thee, to muſe on Nature's page,
To mark each wonder in Creation's plan,
Each mode of being trace, and, humbly ſage,
Deduce from theſe the genuine powers of Man;
Of Man, while warm'd with reaſon's purer ray,
No tool of policy, no dupe to pride;
Before vain Science led his taſte aſtray;
When conſcience was his law, and God his guide.
This let me learn, and learning let me live
The leſſon o'er. From that great Guide of Truth
O may my ſuppliant ſoul the boon receive
To tread thro' age the footſteps of thy youth.

Written in 1758.

ELEGY

*ELEGY III.

To the Rev. Mr. HURD.

FRIEND of my youth, who, when the willing
Muſe
Stream'd o'er my breaſt her warm poetic rays,
Saw'ſt the freſh ſeeds their vital powers diffuſe,
And fed'ſt them with the foſt'ring dew of praiſe!
Whate'er the produce of th' unthrifty ſoil,
The leaves, the flowers, the fruits, to thee belong:
The labourer earns the wages of his toil;
Who form'd the Poet, well may claim the ſong.
Yes, 'tis my pride to own, that taught by thee
My conſcious ſoul ſuperior flights eſſay'd;
Learnt from thy lore the Poet's dignity,
And ſpurn'd the hirelings of the rhyming trade.
Say, ſcenes of Science, ſay, thou haunted ſtream!
[For oft my Muſe-led ſteps did'ſt thou behold]
How on thy banks I rifled every theme,
That Fancy fabled in her age of gold.
How oft' I cry'd, " O come, thou tragic Queen!
" March from thy Greece with firm majeſtic tread!
" Such as when Athens ſaw thee fill her ſcene,
" When Sophocles thy choral Graces led:
" Saw

NOTE.

* This Elegy was prefixt to the former editions of CARACTACUS, as dedicatory of that poem.

" Saw thy proud pall it's purple length devolve;
" Saw thee uplift the glitt'ring dagger high;
" Ponder with fixed brow thy deep resolve,
" Prepar'd to strike, to triumph, and to die.
" Bring then to Britain's plain that choral throng;
" Display thy buskin'd pomp, thy golden lyre;
" Give her historic Forms the soul of song,
" And mingle Attic art with SHAKESPEAR's fire."
" Ah, what, fond boy, dost thou presume to claim?"
The Muse reply'd: " Mistaken suppliant, know,
" To light in SHAKESPEAR's breast the dazzling
" flame
" Exhausted all PARNASSUS could bestow.
" True; Art remains; and, if from his bright page
" Thy mimic power one vivid beam can seize,
" Proceed; and in that best of tasks engage,
" Which tends at once to profit, and to please."
She spake; and Harewood's Towers spontaneous
rose;
Soft virgin warblings echo'd thro' the grove;
And fair ELFRIDA pour'd forth all her woes,
The hapless pattern of connubial love.
More awful scenes old Mona next display'd;
Her caverns gloom'd, her forests wav'd on high,
While flam'd within their consecrated shade
The Genius stern of British liberty.
And see, my HURD! to thee those scenes consign'd;
O! take and stamp them with thy honour'd name.
Around the page be friendship's chaplet twin'd;
And, if they find the road to honest Fame,

And

Perchance the candour of ſome nobler age
May praiſe the Bard, who bade gay Folly bear
* Her cheap applauſes to the buſy ſtage,
And leave him penſive Virtue's ſilent tear:
Choſe too to conſecrate his fav'rite ſtrain
To Him, who grac'd by ev'ry liberal art,
That beſt might ſhine among the learned train,
Yet more excell'd in morals and in heart:
Whoſe equal mind could ſee vain fortune ſhower
Her flimzy favours on the fawning crew,
While, in low Thurcaſton's ſequeſter'd bower,
She fixt him diſtant from Promotion's view:
Yet, ſhelter'd there by calm Contentment's wing,
Pleas'd he could ſmile, and, with ſage HOOKER'S eye,
† "See from his mother earth God's bleſſings ſpring,
"And eat his bread in peace and privacy."

Written in 1759.

NOTE.

* Nil equidem feci (tu ſcis hoc ipſe) Theatris;
Muſa nec in plauſus ambitioſa mea eſt.
OVID. Triſt. Lib. V. El. vii. 23.

† Verbatim from a letter of HOOKER'S to Archbiſhop WHITGIFT. "But, my Lord, I ſhall never be able to finiſh "what I have begun, [viz. his immortal Treatiſe on Eccleſi- "aſtical Polity] unleſs I be removed into ſome quiet country parſonage, "*where I may ſee God's bleſſings ſpring out of my* "*mother earth, and eat my own bread in peace and privacy.*" See his life in the Biographia Britannica.

ELEGY IV.

On the DEATH of a LADY.

THE midnight clock has toll'd; and hark, the bell
Of Death beats slow! heard ye the note profound?
It pauses now; and now, with rising knell,
Flings to the hollow gale its sullen sound.
Yes * * * is dead. Attend the strain,
Daughters of Albion! Ye that, light as air,
So oft have tript in her fantastic train,
With hearts as gay, and faces half as fair:
For she was fair beyond your brightest bloom:
(This envy owns, since now her bloom is fled)
Fair as the Forms that, wove in Fancy's loom,
Float in light vision round the Poet's head.
Whene'er with soft serenity she smil'd,
Or caught the orient blush of quick surprize,
How sweetly mutable, how brightly wild,
The liquid lustre darted from her eyes?
Each look, each motion wak'd a new-born grace,
That o'er her form its transient glory cast:
Some lovelier wonder soon usurp'd the place,
Chas'd by a charm still lovelier than the last.

That bell again! It tells us what ſhe is:
On what ſhe was no more the ſtrain prolong:
Luxuriant Fancy pauſe: an hour like this
Demands the tribute of a ſerious Song.
Maria claims it from that ſable bier,
Where cold and wan the ſlumberer reſts her head;
In ſtill ſmall whiſpers to reflection's ear,
She breathes the ſolemn dictates of the Dead.
O catch the awful notes, and lift them loud;
Proclaim the theme, by Sage, by Fool rever'd;
Hear it, ye Young, ye Vain, ye Great, ye Proud!
'Tis Nature ſpeaks, and Nature will be heard.
Yes, ye ſhall hear, and tremble as ye hear,
While, high with health, your hearts exulting leap:
Ev'n in the midſt of pleaſure's mad career,
The mental Monitor ſhall wake and weep.
For ſay, than * * *'s propitious ſtar,
What brighter planet on your births aroſe;
Or gave of Fortune's gifts an ampler ſhare,
In life to laviſh, or by death to loſe!
Early to loſe; while, borne on buſy wing,
Ye ſip the nectar of each varying bloom:
Nor fear, while baſking in the beams of ſpring,
The wintry ſtorm that ſweeps you to the tomb.
Think of her Fate! revere the heav'nly hand
That led her hence, though ſoon, by ſteps ſo ſlow;
Long at her couch Death took his patient ſtand,
And menac'd oft, and oft withheld the blow:
To give Reflection time, with lenient art,
Each fond deluſion from her ſoul to ſteal;
Teach her from Folly peaceably to part,
And wean her from a world ſhe lov'd ſo well.

Say,

Say, are ye ſure his Mercy ſhall extend
  To you ſo long a ſpan? Alas, ye ſigh:
Make then, while yet ye may, your God your friend,
  And learn with equal eaſe to ſleep or die!
Nor think the Muſe, whoſe ſober voice ye hear,
  Contracts with bigot frown her ſullen brow;
Caſts round Religion's orb the miſts of fear,
  Or ſhades with horrors, what with ſmiles ſhould glow.
No; ſhe would warm you with ſeraphic fire,
  Heirs as ye are of heav'n's eternal day;
Would bid you boldly to that heav'n aſpire,
  Not ſink and ſlumber in your cells of clay.
Know, ye were form'd to range yon azure field,
  In yon æthereal founts of bliſs to lave;
Force then, ſecure in Faith's protecting ſhield,
  The Sting from Death, the Vict'ry from the Grave.
Is this the bigot's rant? Away, ye Vain,—
  Your hopes, your fears in doubt, in dulneſs ſteep:
Go ſooth your ſouls in ſickneſs, grief, or pain,
  With the ſad ſolace of eternal ſleep.
Yet will I praiſe you, triflers as ye are,
  More than thoſe preachers of your fav'rite creed,
Who proudly ſwell the brazen throat of War,
  Who form the Phalanx, bid the battle bleed;
Nor wiſh for more: who conquer, but to * die.
  Hear, Folly, hear; and triumph in the tale:
Like you, they reaſon; not, like you, enjoy
  The breeze of bliſs, that fills your ſilken ſail;

NOTE.

* In a book of *French* verſes, entitled *Oeuvres du Philoſophe de ſans Souci*, and lately reprinted at *Berlin* by authority, under the

On Pleaſure's glitt'ring ſtream ye gayly ſteer
Your little courſe to cold oblivion's ſhore:
They dare the ſtorm, and, through th' inclement year,
Stem the rough ſurge, and brave the torrent's roar.
Is it for Glory? that juſt Fate denies.
Long muſt the Warrior moulder in his ſhroud,
Ere from her trump the heav'n-breath'd accents riſe,
That lift the Hero from the fighting croud.
Is it his graſp of empire to extend?
To curb the fury of inſulting foes?
Ambition, ceaſe: the idle conteſt end:
'Tis but a Kingdom thou can'ſt win or loſe.
And why muſt murder'd myriads loſe their all,
(If Life be all) why deſolation low'r,
With famiſh'd frown, on this affrighted ball,
That thou may'ſt flame the meteor of an hour?
Go, wiſer ye, that flutter Life away,
Crown with the mantling Juice the goblet high;
Weave the light dance, with feſtive freedom gay,
And live your moment, ſince the next ye die.

Yet

the title of *Poeſies Diverſes*, may be found an epiſtle to Marſhal Keith, written profeſſedly againſt the immortality of the Soul. By way of ſpecimen of the whole, take the following lines.

De l'avenir, cher Keith, jugeons par le paſſé;
Comme avant que je fuſſe il n'avoit point penſé,
De meme, apres ma mort, quand toutes mes parties
Par le corruption ſeront aneanties,
Par un meme deſtin il ne penſera plus;
Non, rien n'eſt plus certain, ſoyons-en convaincu, &c.

It is to this epiſtle, that the reſt of the Elegy alludes.

Yet know, vain Scepticks, know, th'Almighty mind,
Who breath'd on Man a portion of his fire,
Bad his free Soul, by earth nor time confin'd,
To Heav'n, to Immortality aſpire.
Nor ſhall the Pile of Hope, his Mercy rear'd,
By vain Philoſophy be e'er deſtroy'd:
Eternity, by all or wiſh'd or fear'd,
Shall be by all or ſuffer'd or enjoy'd.

Written in 1760.

DRAMATIC

P O E M S.

ELFRIDA:

Written on the MODEL

OF THE

ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY.

First publiſhed in the year 1751.

The ARGUMENT.

EDGAR, *King of* England, *having heard the beauty of* ELFRIDA, *daughter of* ORGAR, *Earl of* Devonſhire, *highly celebrated; ſent his Favourite Miniſter* ATHELWOLD *to the father's caſtle, to diſcover whether ſhe was really ſo beautiful, as Fame reported her to be; and if ſhe was, to offer her his Crown in marriage.* ATHELWOLD, *on ſeeing her, fell violently in Love with her himſelf; and married her; conveying her ſoon after to his own caſtle in* Harewood Foreſt, *where he viſited her by ſtealth from court; and in his abſence left her with a train of* Britiſh *Virgins, who form the* CHORUS. *After three months,* ORGAR, *diſapproving this confinement of his daughter, came diſguiſed to* Harewood *to diſcover the cauſe of it. His arrival opens the Drama. The incidents, which are produced by* ATHELWOLD'*s return from court (who was abſent when* ORGAR *came to his caſtle) and afterwards by the unexpected viſit of the King, form the Epiſode of the Tragedy; the feigned pardon of* ATHELWOLD, *drawn from the King by the earneſt interceſſions of* ELFRIDA, *brings on the* PERIPETIA, *or change of fortune; and the ſingle combat between the King and* ATHELWOLD, *in which the latter is ſlain, occaſions* ELFRIDA *to take the vow, which completes the* CATASTROPHE.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ORGAR, Earl of Devonſhire.

CHORUS, of Britiſh Virgins.

ELFRIDA, Daughter to ORGAR.

ATHELWOLD, Huſband to ELFRIDA.

EDWIN, a Meſſenger.

EDGAR, King of ENGLAND.

ORGAR, diſguiſed in a Peaſant's Habit, ſpeaks the Prologue.

SCENE, a Lawn before ATHELWOLD's Caſtle in *Harewood Foreſt*.

E L F R I D A,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

ORGAR.

HOW nobly does this venerable wood,
Gilt with the glories of the orient ſun,
Enboſom yon fair manſion! The ſoft air
Salutes me with moſt cool and temp'rate breath;
And, as I tread, the flow'r-beſprinkled lawn
Sends up a gale of fragrance. I ſhould gueſs,
If e'er Content deign'd viſit mortal clime,
This was her place of deareſt reſidence.
Grant, Heav'n! I find it ſuch. 'Tis now three months
Since firſt Earl ATHELWOLD eſpous'd my daughter.
He then beſought me, for ſome little ſpace
The nuptials might be ſecret; many reaſons,
He ſaid, induc'd to this: I made no pauſe,
But, reſting on his prudence, to his will
Gave abſolute concurrence. Soon as married,
He to this ſecret ſeat convey'd ELFRIDA;
Convey'd her as by ſtealth enjoy'd, and left her:
Yet not without I know not what excuſe
Of call to court, of EDGAR's royal friendſhip,
And England's welfare. To his prince he went:
And ſince, as by intelligence I gather,

He oft returns to this his cloyſter'd wife;
But ever with a privacy moſt ſtudied;
Borrowing diſguiſes till inventive art
Can ſcarce ſupply him with variety.
His viſits, as they're ſtol'n, are alſo ſhort;
Seldom beyond the circuit of one ſun;
Then back to court, while ſhe his abſence mourns
Full many a lonely hour. I brook not this.
Had ATHELWOLD eſpous'd ſome baſe-born peaſant,
This uſage had been apt: but when he took
My daughter to his arms, he took a virgin,
Thro' whoſe rich veins the blood of Britiſh Kings
Ran in unſullied ſtream. Her lineage ſure
Might give her place and notice with the nobleſt
In EDGAR's court. ELFRIDA's beauty too
(I ſpeak not from a father's fooliſh fondneſs)
Would ſhine amid the faireſt, and reflect
No vulgar glory on that beauty's maſter.
This act beſpeaks the madman. Who, that own'd
An em'rald, jaſper, or rich chryſolite,
Would hide its luſtre, or not bid it blaze
Conſpicuous on his brow? Haply ATHELWOLD
May have eſpous'd ſome other. 'Sdeath he durſt not.
My former feats in arms muſt have inform'd him,
That ORGAR, while he liv'd, would never prove
A traitor to his honour. If he has—
This aged arm is not ſo much unſtrung
By ſlack'ning years, but juſt revenge will brace it.
And, by yon awful heav'n—But hold, my rage,
I came to ſearch into this matter coolly.
Hence, to conceal the father and the earl,
This pilgrim's ſtaff, and ſcrip, and all theſe marks
Of vagrant poverty.

CHORUS

CHORUS (within.)

Hail to thy living light, ambroſial Morn!
All hail thy roſeat ray!

ORGAR

But hark, the ſound of ſweeteſt minſtrelſy
Breaks on mine ear. The females, I ſuppoſe,
Whom ATHELWOLD has left my child's attendants:
That, when ſhe wails the abſence of her lord,
Their lenient airs, and ſprightly-fancied ſongs,
May ſteal away her woes. See, they approach:
This grove ſhall ſhroud me till they ceaſe their ſtrain;
Then I'll addreſs them with ſome feigned tale.

[*He retires.*

CHORUS.

ODE.

Hail to thy living light,
Ambroſial Morn! all hail thy roſeat ray:
That bids young nature all her charms diſplay
In varied beauty bright;
That bids each dewy-ſpangled flowret riſe,
And dart around its vermeil dies;
Bids ſilver luſtre grace yon ſparkling tide,
That winding warbles down the mountain's ſide.
Away, ye Goblins all,
Wont the bewilder'd traveller to daunt;
Whoſe vagrant feet have trac'd your ſecret haunt
Beſide ſome lonely wall,
Or ſhatter'd ruin of a moſs-grown tow'r,
Where, at pale midnight's ſtilleſt hour

Thro'

Thro' each rough chink the ſolemn orb of night
Pours momentary gleams of trembling light.
Away, ye Elves, away:
Shrink at ambroſial Morning's living ray;
That living ray, whoſe pow'r benign
Unfolds the ſcene of glory to our eye,
Where, thron'd in artleſs majeſty,
The cherub Beauty ſits on Nature's ruſtic ſhrine.—

CHORUS, ORGAR.

CHORUS.

Silence, my ſiſters. Whence this rudeneſs, ſtranger,
That thus has prompted thine unbidden ear
To liſten to our ſtrains?

ORGAR.

Your pardon, Virgins:
I meant not rudeneſs tho' I dar'd to liſten;
For ah! what ear ſo fortify'd and barr'd
Againſt the force of powerful harmony,
But would with tranſport to ſuch ſweet aſſailants
Surrender its attention? Never yet
Have I paſs'd by the night-bird's fav'rite ſpray,
What time ſhe powers her wild and artleſs ſong,
Without attentive pauſe and ſilent rapture;
How could I then, with ſavage diſregard,
Hear voices tun'd by nature ſweet as her's,
Grac'd with all art's addition?

CHORUS.

Thy mean garb,
And this thy courtly phraſe but ill accord.
Whence, and what art thou, ſtranger?

ORGAR.

ORGAR.

Virgins, know
These limbs have oft been wrapt in richer vest:
But what avails it now? all have their fate;
And mine has been most wretched.

CHORUS.

May we ask
What cruel cause——

ORGAR.

No! let this hapless breast
Still hide the melancholy tale.

CHORUS.

We know,
There oft is found an avarice in grief;
And the wan eye of Sorrow loves to gaze
Upon its secret hoard of treasur'd woes
In pining solitude Perhaps thy mind
Takes the same pensive cast: if not, permit
That we in social sympathy, may drop
The tender tear.

ORGAR.

Ah! ill would it become ye,
To let the woes of such a wretch as I am,
E'er dim your bright eyes with a pitying tear.

CHORUS.

The eye, that will not weep another's sorrow,
Should boast no gentler brightness than the glare,
That reddens in the eye-ball of the wolf.
Let us entreat——

ORGAR.

Know, Virgins, I was born
To ample property of lands and flocks,

On

On this side Tweeda's stream. My youth and vigor
Atchiev'd full many a feat of martial prowess:
Nor was my skill in chivalry unnoted
In the fair volume of my sov'reign's love;
Who ever held me in his best esteem,
And closest to his person. When he paid,
What all must pay, to fate; and short-liv'd EDWY
Mounted the vacant throne, which now his brother
Fills (as loud fame reports) right royally;
I then, unfit for pageantry and courts,
Sat down in peace among my faithful vassals,
At my paternal seat. But ah! not long
Had I enjoy'd the sweets of that recess,
Ere by the savage inroads of base hinds,
That sallied frequent from the Scottish heights,
My lands were all laid waste, my people murder'd;
And I, thro' impotence of age unfit
To quell their brutal rage, was forc'd to drag
My mis'ries thro' the land, a friendless wand'rer.

CHORUS.

We pity and condole thy wretched state,
But we can do no more; which, on thy part,
Claims just returns of pity: for whose lot
Demands it more than theirs, whom fate forbids
To taste the joys of courteous charity;
To wipe the trickling tears, which dew the cheek
Of palsy'd age; to smooth its furrow'd brow,
And pay its grey hairs each due reverence?
Yet such delight we are forbid to taste!
For 'tis our lord's command, that not a stranger,
However high or lowly his degree,
Have entrance at these gates.

ORGAR.

Who may this tyrant——

CHORUS.

Alas, no tyrant he; the more our wonder
At this harſh mandate: Tenderneſs and Pity
Have made his breaſt their home. He is a man
More apt, thro' inborn gentleneſs to err
In giving mercy's tide too free a courſe,
Than with a thrifty and illiberal hand
To ſtint its channel. This his praiſe you'll hear
The univerſal theme in EDGAR's court:
For EDGAR ranks him firſt in his high favor;
Loads him with honours which the Earl receives
As does the golden cenſer frankincenſe,
Only to ſpread a ſacred gale of bleſſings
Around on all.

ORGAR.

Methinks, this pleaſing portrait
Bears ſtrong reſemblance of Lord ATHELWOLD.

CHORUS.

Himſelf: no Briton but has heard his fame.

ORGAR.

'Tis wondrous ſtrange; can you conceive no cauſe
For this his conduct?

CHORUS.

None, that we may truſt.

ORGAR.

Your garbs beſpake you for the fair attendants
Of ſome illuſtrious dame, the wife, or ſiſter
Of this dread earl.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

On this head too, old man,
We are commanded a religious ſilence:
Which ſtrictly we obey; for well we know
Fidelity's a virtue that ennobles
Ev'n ſervitude itſelf: Farewell, depart
With our beſt wiſhes; we do treſpaſs much
To hold this open converſe with a ſtranger.

ORGAR.

Stay, Virgins, ſtay; have ye no friendly ſhed,
But bord'ring on your caſtle, where theſe limbs
Might lay their load of mis'ry for an hour?
Have ye no food, however mean and homely,
Wherewith I might ſupport declining nature?
Ev'n while I ſpeak, I find my ſpirits fail;
And well, full well, I know theſe trembling feet,
Ere I can pace a hundred ſteps, will ſink
Beneath their wretched burthen.

CHORUS.

Piteous ſight!
What ſhall we do, my ſiſters? To admit
This man beneath the roof, would be to ſcorn
The Earl's ſtrict interdict; and yet my heart
Bleeds to behold that white, old, rev'rend head
Bow'd with ſuch miſery.—Yes, we muſt aid him.
Hie thee, poor pilgrim, to yon neighb'ring bow'r,
O'er which an old oak ſpreads his awful arm,
Mantled in browneſt foliage, and beneath
The ivy, gadding from th'untwiſted ſtem,
Curtains each verdant ſide. There thou may'ſt reſt,
There too, perchance, ſome of our ſiſterhood
May bring thee ſpeedy ſuſtenance.

ORGAR.

Kind Heav'n!

Reward——————

CHORUS.

Ah, ſtay not here to thank us,
But haſte to give thine age this meet repoſe.
That done, we do conjure thee leave the place
With cautious ſecrecy; for was it known,
That thus we treſpaſs'd on our lord's command,
The conſequence were fatal.

ORGAR.

Faireſt Maid!
Think not I'll baſely draw down puniſhments
On my preſervers. I retire. May bleſſings
Show'r'd from yon fount of Bliſs repay your kindneſs.
[Exit Orgar.

SEMICHORUS.

Yes, ſiſters, yes, when pale diſtreſs
Implores your aiding hand,
Let not a partial faithfulneſs,
Let not a mortal's vain command
Urge you to break th'unalterable laws
Of heav'n-deſcended Charity.
Ah! follow ſtill the ſoft-ey'd Deity;
For know, each path ſhe draws,
Along the plain of life,
Meets at the central dome of heart-felt Joy.
Follow the ſoft-ey'd Deity;
She bids ye, as ye hope for bleſſings, bleſs.
Aid then the gen'ral cauſe of gen'ral happineſs.

SEMICHORUS.

Humanity thy awful ſtrain
Shall ever greet our ear,

Sonorous,

Sonorous, ſweet, and clear.
And as amid the ſprightly-ſwelling-train
Of dulcet notes, that breathe
From flute or lyre,
The deep baſe rolls its manly melody,
Guiding the tuneful choir;
So thou, Humanity, ſhalt lead along
Th'accordant paſſions in their moral ſong,
And give our mental concert trueſt harmony.

CHORUS.

But ſee, ELFRIDA comes.
Should we again reſume our former ſtrain,
And hail the Morn that paints her waking beauties;
Or ſtay her gentle bidding? Rather ſtay;
For, as I think, ſhe ſeems in penſive mood:
And there are times, when to the ſorrowing ſoul
Ev'n harmony is harſhneſs.

ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

O my Virgins,
With what a leaden and retarding weight,
Does Expectation load the wing of Time?
Alas, how have theſe three dull hours crept on,
Since firſt the crimſon mantle of the morn
Skirted yon gay horizon? Say, my Friends,
Have I miſcounted? Did not ATHELWOLD
At parting fix this morn for his return?
This dear long-wiſh'd for morn? He did, he did,
And ſeal'd it with a kiſs; I could not err.
And yet he comes not. He was wont outſtrip
The ſun's moſt early ſpeed, and make its riſing
To me unwiſh'd and needleſs. This delay
Creates ſtrange doubts and ſcruples in my breaſt.

Courts

Courts throng with beauties, and my ATHELWOLD
Has a ſoft, ſuſceptible heart, as prone
To yield its love to ev'ry ſparkling eye,
As is the muſk-roſe to diſpenſe its fragrance
To ev'ry whiſp'ring breeze; perhaps he's falſe,
Perhaps ELFRIDA's wretched.

CHORUS.

See, ELFRIDA,
Ah ſee! how round yon branching elm the ivy
Claſps its green folds, and poiſons what ſupports it.
Not leſs injurious to the ſhoots of Love
Is ſickly jealouſy.

ELFRIDA.

My mind nor pines
With jealouſy, nor reſts ſecure in peace.
Who loves, muſt fear; and ſure who loves like me,
Muſt greater fear.

CHORUS.

Yet whence the cauſe? Your Earl
Has ever yet (this little breach excepted)
Been punctual to appointment. Did his eye
Glow with leſs ardent paſſion when he left you,
Than at the firſt bleſt meeting? No! I mark'd him,
His parting glance was that of fervent love,
And conſtancy unalter'd? Do not fear him.

ELFRIDA.

I ſhould not fear him, were his preſent ſtay
The only cauſe. Alas, it is not ſo!
Why comes my Earl ſo ſecret to theſe arms?
Why, but becauſe he dreads the juſt reproach
Of ſome deluded fair one? Why am I
Here ſhrouded up like the pale Votariſt,

Who

Who knows no viſitant, ſave the lone owl,
That nightly leaves his ivy-ſhrouded cell,
And ſails on ſlow wing thro' the cloiſter'd iſles,
Liſt'ning her ſaintly oriſons? Why am I
Deny'd to follow my departed Lord
Whene'er his duty calls him to the palace?

CHORUS.

Covet not that; the nobleſt proof of love
That ATHELWOLD can give, is ſtill to guard
Your beauties from the blaſt of courtly gales.
The crimſon bluſh of virgin modeſty,
The delicate ſoft tints of innocence
There all fly off, and leave no boaſt behind
But well-rang'd, faded features. Ah, Elfrida,
Should you be doom'd, which happier fate forbid!
To drag your hours through all that nauſeous ſcene
Of pageantry and vice; your purer breaſt,
True to its virtuous reliſh, ſoon would heave
A fervent ſigh for innocence and Harewood.

ELFRIDA.

You much miſtake me, Virgin's; the throng'd palace
Were undeſir'd by me, did not that palace
Detain my ATHELWOLD. If he were here,
His preſence would convert this range of oaks
To ſtately columns; theſe gay-liv'ried flow'rs
To troops of gallant ladies; and yon deer,
That jut their antlers forth in ſportive fray,
To armed knights at jouſt or tournament.
If ATHELWOLD dwelt here; if no ambition
Could lure his ſteps from love, and this ſtill foreſt;
If I might never moan his time of abſence,
Longer than that which ſerv'd him for the chaſe
Or of the wolf, or ſtag; or when he bore

The

The hood-wink'd falcon forth ; might theſe, my Virgins,
And theſe alone, be love's ſhort intervals,
I ſhould not have one thought remote from Harewood.

CHORUS.

And would you wiſh that *Athelwold* ſhould ſlight
The weal of England, and on theſe light toys
Waſte his unvalued hours ? No, fond *Elfrida* ;
His active ſoul is wing'd for nobler flights.

ELFRIDA.

What then, muſt England's welfare hold my Earl
For ever from theſe ſhades ?

CHORUS.

We ſay not that.
The youth who bathes in pleaſure's tempting ſtream
At well-judg'd intervals, feels all his ſoul
Nerv'd with recruited ſtrength ; but if too oft
He ſwims in ſportive mazes through the flood,
It chills his languid virtue. For this cauſe
Your Earl forbids, that theſe enchanting groves,
And their fair miſtreſs ſhould poſſeſs him wholly.
He knows he has a country and a king,
That claim his firſt attention ; yet be ſure,
'Twill not be long, ere his unbending mind
Shall loſe in ſweet oblivion ev'ry care,
Among th' embow'ring ſhades that veil *Elfrida*.

ELFRRIDA.

O be that ſpeech prophetic ; may he ſoon
Seek theſe embow'ring ſhades ! Meanwhile, my friends,

Sooth me with harmony. I know full well
That ye were nurs'd in Cornwall's wizard caves,
And oft have pac'd the fairy-peopled vales
Of Devon, where Pofterity retains
Some vein of that old minftrelfy, which breath'd
Through each time-honor'd grove of Britifh oak.
There, where the fpreading confecrated boughs
Fed the fage mifletoe, the holy Druids
Lay rapt in moral mufings; while the Bards
Call'd from their folemn harps fuch lofty airs,
As drew down fancy from the realms of Light
To paint fome radiant vifion on their minds,
Of high myfterious import. But on me
Such ftrains fublime were wafted: I but afk
A fprightly fong to fpeed the lazy flight
Of thefe dull hours. And Mufic fure can find
A magic fpell to make them fkim their round,
Swift as the fwallow circles. Try its power:
While I, from yonder hillock, watch his coming.

[*Exit Elfrida.*

CHORUS.

ODE.

The Turtle tells her plaintive tale,
Sequefter'd in fome fhadowy vale;
The Lark in radiant æther floats,
And fwells in wild extatic notes:
Meanwhile on yonder hawthorn fpray
The Linnet wakes her temp'rate lay;
She haunts no folitary fhade,
She flutters o'er no fun-fhine mead,

No

No love-lorn griefs depreſs her ſong,
No raptures lift it loudly high,
But ſoft ſhe thrills, amid the aerial throng,
Smooth ſimple ſtrains of ſob'reſt harmony.

Sweet Bird! like thine our lay ſhall flow,
Nor gayly briſk, nor ſadly ſlow;
For to thy note ſedate, and clear,
CONTENT ſtill lends a liſt'ning ear.
Reclin'd this moſſy bank along,
Oft has ſhe heard thy careleſs ſong:
Why hears not now? What fairer grove
From Harewood lures her devious love?
What fairer grove than Harewood knows,
More woodland walks, more fragrant gales,
More ſhadowy bowers inviting ſoft repoſe,
More ſtreams flow-wand'ring through her winding vales?

Perhaps to ſome lone cave the Rover flies,
Where lull'd in pious peace the Hermit lies.
For, from the Hall's tumultuous ſtate,
Where banners wave with blazon'd gold,
There will the meek-ey'd Matron oft retreat,
And with the ſolemn Sage high converſe hold.

There, Goddeſs, on the ſhaggy mound,
Where tumbling torrents roar around,
Where pendant mountains o'er your head
Stretch their reverential ſhade;
You liſten, while the holy Seer
Slowly chaunts his veſpers clear;
Or of his ſparing meſs partake,
The ſav'ry pulſe, the wheaten cake,

The bev'rage cool of limpid rill;
Then rising light, your host you bless,
And o'er his saintly temples bland distill
Seraphic day-dreams of heav'n's happiness.

Where'er thou art, inchanting Power,
Thou soon wilt smile in Harewood's bower:
Soon will thy fairy feet be seen,
Printing this dew-impearled green;
Soon shall we mark thy gestures meek,
Thy glitt'ring eye, and dimpled cheek,
Among the welcome guests that move
Attendant on the state of Love.
There, when the Sov'reign leads along
Of Sports and Smiles a jocund train,
Then last, yet loveliest of the lovely throng,
Thou com'st to soften, yet secure his reign.

And, hark, compleating our pr[illegible].
The fleet hoof rattles o'er the flinty way;
Now nearer, and now nearer sounds.
Avaunt! ye vain, delusive Fears.
Hark! Echo tells through Harewood's amplest bounds
That Love, Content, and ATHELWOLD appears.

ATHELWOLD, ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

Look ever thus; with that bright glance of joy
Thus alway meet my transports. Let these arms
Thus ever fold me; and this cheek, that blooms
With all health's op'ning roses, press my lips,
Warm as at this blest moment.

ELFRIDA.

Athelwold,
I had prepar'd me many a ſtern rebuke;
Had arm'd my brow with frowns, and taught my eye
Th' averted glance of coldneſs, which might beſt
Greet ſuch a loit'ring lover: but I find,
'Twas a vain taſk; for this my truant heart
Forgets each leſſon, which reſentment taught,
And in thy ſight knows only to be happy.

ATHELWOLD.

My beſt *Elfrida*—Heav'ns: it cannot laſt.
The giddy height of joy, to which I'm lifted,
Is as a hanging rock, at whoſe low foot
The black and beating ſurge of Infamy
Rolls ready to receive, and ſink my ſoul.

ELFRIDA.

[illegible]ſoon to [illegible] this muſing mood—
I thought, my Lord, you promis'd you would leave
Theſe looks behind at Court. Nay, 'twas the cauſe
Aſſign'd for this my reſidence at Harewood,
That you might never come to theſe fond arms,
But with a breaſt devoid of public care,
And fill'd alone with rapture and *Elfrida.*
Said you not ſo? Why then that penſive poſture,
That down-caſt eye? Surely the City's din,
And this calm grove have loſt their difference.
I'll with you to the palace.

ATHELWOLD.

Heav'n forbid!

ELFRIDA.

Nay, my beſt Lord, I meant it but in ſport;
For ſhould you bid me quit theſe blooming lawns,
For ſome bare heath, or drear unpeopled deſert;
Believe me, I would think its wildneſs Eden,
If *Athelwold* with frequent viſitation
Endear'd the ſavage ſcene: but yet I fear
My Father.

ATHELWOLD.

Hah! why him?

ELFRIDA.

You know his temper;
How jealous of his rank, and his trac'd lineage
From royal anceſtry. I fear me much,
He will not brook you ſhould conceal me long
In this lone privacy: No, he will deem it
Far unbecoming her, whoſe veins are fill'd
With the rich ſtream of his nobility.
Should it be ſo, his hot and fiery nature,
I doubt, will blaze, and do ſome dreadful outrage.

ATHELWOLD.

He need not know it, or, if chance he ſhould,
It matters not, if ſo this foreſt life
Seem of your own adoption and free choice.
And that it will ſo ſeem, I truſt that love,
Which ever yet has met my wayward will
With pleas'd compliance, and unaſk'd aſſent.

ELFRIDA.

And ever ſhall: yet blame me not, my Lord,
If prying womanhood ſhould prompt a wiſh
To learn the cauſe of this your ſtrange commotion,

Which ever wakes, if I but drop one thought
Of quitting Harewood.

ATHELWOLD.

Go to the clear ſurface
Of yon unruffled lake, and, bending o'er it,
There read my anſwer.

ELFRIDA.

Theſe are riddles, Sir—

ATHELWOLD.

No; for its glaſſy and reflecting ſurface
Will ſmile with charms too tempting for a palace.

ELFRIDA.

Does *Athelwold* diſtruſt *Elfrida*'s faith?

ATHELWOLD.

No: but he much diſtruſts *Elfrida*'s beauty.

ELFRIDA.

Away, you trifle.

ATHELWOLD.

Never more in earneſt;
I would not for the throne which *Edgar* ſits on,
That *Edgar* ſhould behold it.

ELFRIDA.

What, my Lord,
Think you the face, that caught your ſingle heart,
Will make all hearts its captives? Vain ſurmiſe.
Yet grant it could; the face is your's alone:
Not *Edgar*'s ſelf would dare to ſeize it from you.
Edgar's a King, and not a tyrant.

ATHELWOLD.

True,
Edgar's a King, a juſt one; his firm feet

Walk ever in the fore-right road of honor :
Nor do I know what lure can draw his ſteps
Devious from that ſtraight path, ſave only one :
That tempting lure is beauty. Ah ! *Elfrida*,
Throw but the dazz'ling bait within his view,
The untam'd wolf does not with fiercer rage
Burſt the ſlight bondage of the ſilken net,
Than he the ties of law. Late, very late,
Smit caſually with young *Matilda*'s face,
He ſtraight commanded her reluctant Mother
To yield her to his arms : nor had ſhe 'ſcap'd
The violating fervor of his love,
Had not the prudent dame ſuborn'd her handmaid,
To take the unchaſte office, and be led
Veil'd in the maſk of night, to *Edgar*'s chamber
A counterfeit *Matilda*. As it chanc'd,
The damſel pleas'd the King, nor did detection
A whit abate his fondneſs ; he forgave
The prudent mother, eas'd *Matilda*'s fears,
And led the wanton minſtrel to his court,
Where ſtill ſhe ſhares—

CHORUS.

Behold, Earl *Athelwold*,
A meſſenger arrives ; his ſpeed and aſpect
Speak ſome important errand.

EDWIN, ATHELWOLD, ELFRIDA,
CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

How now, EDWIN ?

EDWIN.

The King, my Lord, is on his way to Harewood.

ATHEL-

ATHELWOLD.

The King!

EDWIN.

His purpoſe is to paſs through Mercia:
And in a haſty meſſage, ſome two hours
After you left the palace, this his pleaſure
Was ſent you by Lord SEOFRID; withal
Commanding your attendance. You being abſent,
He ſtraightway turn'd his courſe through this fair foreſt,
Meaning to chaſe the Stag; his train is ſmall,
As was his purpoſe ſudden.

ELFRIDA.

Good, my Lord,
Why thus perplex'd?

CHORUS.

Heav'ns! what a deep Deſpair
Sits on his brow?

ELFRIDA.

The notice ſure is ſhort;
But that's a trifle, a ſmall train requires
The ſmaller preparation: let him come.

ATHELWOLD.

Yes, let him come: ſo thou wilt ſay, *Elfrida*,
When thou haſt heard my tale. Yes, let him come,
So wilt thou ſay, and let thy huſband periſh.
Yet ſhall theſe arms once more embrace thee cloſely,
Ere yet thou fly them as the pois'nous adder.
'Tis o'er: in that embrace *Elfrida*'s Love
Was buried; and in that embrace, the Peace
Of wretched *Athelwold*.

ELFRIDA.

What may this be?

ATHELWOLD.

O *Edwin*, *Edwin*, when ſurviving Malice
Shall prey upon the Fame of thy dead Maſter,
Wilt thou not ſome way ſtrive to check the Fiend's
Inſatiate fury? Wilt thou ſee my name
Defil'd, and blacken'd with Detraction's venom,
And bear it patiently?

ELFRIDA.

What means my beſt—

ATHELWOLD.

Peace; not a word of Beſt, or Lov'd, or Dear:
Theſe are not titles now for thee to uſe,
Or me to triumph in. Virgins, retire;
We would a while be private. Nay, return.
Concealment would be vain, and ye and *Edwin*
Are bound to me. *Albina*! as for you,
I ſav'd your father, when his blood was forfeit.

CHORUS.

Not I, great Earl, alone, but all this train
Are bound by ev'ry tie of faith and love
To gen'rous *Athelwold*; to that mild maſter,
Who never forc'd our Service to one act,
But of ſuch liberal ſort, as Freedom's ſelf
Would ſmilingly perform.

ATHELWOLD.

It may be ſo,
But where's the tie, *Elfrida*, that may bind
Thy faith and love?

ELFRIDA.

The ſtrongeſt ſure, my Lord,
The golden, nuptial tie. Try but its ſtrength.

ATHELWOLD.

I muſt perforce this inſtant. Know, *Elfrida*
Once, on a day of high feſtivity,
The youthful King, encircled with his Nobles,
Crown'd high the ſparkling bowl; and much of Love
Of beauty much the ſprightly converſe ran.
When, as it well might chance, the briſk Lord *Ardulph*
Made gallant note of *Orgar*'s peerleſs daughter,
And in ſuch phraſe as might enflame a breaſt
More cool than *Edgar*'s. Early on the morrow
Th' impatient Monarch gave me ſwift commiſſion,
To view thoſe charms, of which Lord *Ardulph*'s tongue
Had giv'n ſuch warm deſcription: to whoſe words
If my impartial eye gave full aſſent,
I had his royal mandate on the inſtant
To hail you Queen of England.

ELFRIDA.

'Stead of which
You came, and hail'd me Wife of *Athelwold.*
Was this the tale I was ſo taught to fear?
Was this the deed, that known would make me fly
Thy claſping arm, as 'twere the pois'nous adder?
No, let this tender, fond embrace aſſure thee,
That thy *Elfrida*'s love can never die;
Or, if it could, this animating touch
Would ſoon rewake it into life and rapture.

ATHELWOLD.

Doſt thou then pardon me? Come, injur'd ſovereign,
Plunge deep thy ſword of juſtice in this breaſt,
And I will die contented.

ELFRIDA.

Heav'n forbid!
What can be done?

CHORUS.

Indeed, ye conſtant pair,
'Tis fit ye ſtrive to fly the coming danger.
For Safety now ſits wav'ring on your Love,
Like the light down upon the Thiſtle's beard,
Which ev'ry breeze may part. Say, noble Earl,
What feint was us'd to lull the king's impatience?

ATHELWOLD.

Soon as theſe ſhades had veil'd my beauteous bride,
I haſted back to Edgar, laugh'd at Ardulph,
And talk'd of Elrrid, as of vulgar beauties;
Own'd no uncommon light'ning in her eye,
No breaſt that ſham'd the ſnow, or cheek the roſe.
The ſprightly King believ'd me, and forgot her.

CHORUS.

But an alliance, great as Athelwold's
With *Orgar*'s daughter, ſoon would blaze abroad,
The theme of popular converſe.

ATHELWOLD.

True, it would;
And for that Reaſon, when I laſt was here,
The King was taught I went to wed *Elfrida*.

ELFRIDA.

How ſo, my Lord?

ATHEL-

ATHELWOLD.

Thy Father, my *Elfrida*,
Has rich possessions: These, and these alone,
I made my theme of Love; and told the king,
That tho' thy face (pardon the impious falshood)
Boasted not charms to grace a Monarch's throne,
Yet would thy dow'r well suit his minister.
I therefore meant to ask thee of thy father,
And (that my want of skill in choice might 'scape
All censure) hide thee close in Harewood castle.
Edgar with smiles consented, and, I think,
Harbours no thought of my disloyalty.

ELFRIDA.

If so, what danger now?

ATHELWOLD.

Ask'st thou, what danger?
'Sdeath, will that [illegible] not instantly proclaim
My tenfold treachery?

ELFRIDA.

He shall not see me.
I'll hide me instant in some secret chamber,
And robe this virgin in my bridal vestments.

ATHELWOLD.

Thy Love, like balm, runs trickling o'er the wounds
Of my torn bosom; yet 'tis vain, 'tis vain:
Thou must thyself appear, for *Ardulph* ever
Attends the king, and would detect the fraud.

ELFRIDA.

If so, yet still I can insure our safety;
For as you fear my softness of complexion,

I'll ſtain it with the juice of duſky leaves,
Or yellow berries, which this various wood
From tree or ſhrub will yield me. Theſe I'll uſe,
And form a thouſand methods to conceal
The little gleams of grace, which Nature lent me.
Fear not my caution.

ATHELWOLD.

Gentleſt, beſt of Creatures,
Go, do then as thy tender care directs.
And yet how vain? What wond'rous art can ſteal
The liquid lightnings from thoſe radiant eyes,
Or rob the wavy ringlets of that hair
Of all their nameleſs graces? Say it could,
Yet would that modeſt, but majeſtic mien,
That inborn dignity of ſoul, which breathes
Thro' each angelic geſture, ſtill remain
To ſeize the heart of *Edgar*. Reſt, *Elfrida*,
Reſt as thou art, in all that blaze of beauty:
I muſt ſubmit to my juſt lot, and loſe thee.

ELFRIDA.

Away, my Lord, with theſe too anxious ſcruples:
Fear not my carriage; I will ſtoop my head,
Drawl out an idiot phraſe, and do each act
With ev'n a rude and peaſant aukwardneſs.

EDWIN.

Ere this, my Lord, I think, the King has reach'd
The full mid-way; 'twere fit you ſtood prepar'd
To give him meeting.

ATHELWOLD.

Give him a meeting, Edwin!
Alas! I have no maſk to veil my baſeneſs.
When deep contrition ſhadows all my ſoul,

I can-

I cannot dreſs my features in light ſmiles,
And look the thing I am not. No, theſe eyes
Are not as yet true vaſſals to my purpoſe,
As yet indeed I am but half a villain.

ELFRIDA.

You weigh this matter in too nice a balance.
Your crime, my Lord, is but the crime of love:
Thouſands like you have fail'd.

ATHELWOLD.

I know, *Elfrida*,
Could love abſolve the crime, my ſoul were pure
As maiden innocence. Yes, I do love thee,
And thou art fair—beyond—But that's my bane;
Thy ev'ry charm adds weight to my offence,
And heaps freſh wrongs upon the beſt of Maſters.
Yes, *Elfrid*, *Edgar* was the beſt of Maſters.
O hide me from th[illegible]hought in that dear boſom—
Heavens! I muſt die or keep her.

ELFRIDA.

Live, or die,
I'm thine alike. Death cannot aught abate,
Or life augment, my love. Let this embrace
Be witneſs of my truth.

ATHELWOLD.

It ſhall, it ſhall:
Thy ev'ry word and look declares thee faithful,
Secure of all thy love, and all thy prudence,
Returning confidence has arm'd my ſoul
For this dread meeting: reſting on thy truth
I go—— [*Exit Athelwold.*

EL-

ELFRIDA.

Go, and thy guardian ſaint preſerve thee,
Show'r bleſſings vaſt as would my laviſh love,
Had I his power to bleſs thee!

CHORUS.

Yes, my Siſters,
The ſilent awe that reigns thro' all your train,
Befits ye well. Let Admiration firſt
Pay her mute tribute. She can beſt expreſs,
By thoſe her kindling cheeks, and lifted eyes,
Where the tear twinkles, that tranſcendent praiſe
Elfrida's Virtue claims.

ELFRIDA.

My Virtue, Virgins,
Is only Love. Or, ſay that it be virtue,
It owes its ſource to Love, to chaſteſt Love,
Than which what paſſion more impels the mind
To fair and gen'rous action? But the hours
Are precious now. I'll to yon neighb'ring grove:
There grows an azure flow'r, I oft have mark'd it,
Which ſtains the preſſing finger, with a juice
Of duſky, yellow tinct: its name I know not.
I'll fetch and try it ſtraight. Wait my return.

[*Exit Elfrida.*

CHORUS.

ODE.

Whence does this ſudden Luſtre riſe,
That gilds the grove? Not like the noontide beam,
Which ſparkling dances on the trembling ſtream,
Nor the blue lightning's flaſh ſwift-ſhooting thro' the ſkies.

But

But ſuch a ſolemn ſteady Light,
As o'er the cloudleſs azure ſteals,
When Cynthia riding on the brow of night,
Stops in their mid career her ſilver wheels.

Whence can it riſe, but from the ſober pow'r
Of Constancy? She, heav'n-born Queen,
Deſcends, and here in *Harewood*'s hallow'd bower,
Fixes her ſtedfaſt reign:
Stedfaſt, as when her high command
Gives to the ſtarry band
Their radiant Stations in heav'n's ample plain.
Stedfaſt, as when around this nether ſphere,
She winds the various year.
Tells what time the Snow-drop cold
Its maiden whiteneſs may unfold,
When the golden harveſts bend,
When the ruddy fruits deſcend.
Then bids pale Winter wake, to pour
The pearly hail's tranſlucent ſhow'r,
To caſt his ſilv'ry mantle o'er the woods,
And bind in cryſtal chains the ſlumb'ring floods.

The Soul, which ſhe inſpires, has pow'r to climb
To all the heights ſublime
Of Virtue's tow'ring hill.
That hill, at whoſe low foot weak-warbling ſtray
The ſcanty ſtream of human praiſe,
A ſhallow trickling rill.
While on the Summit hov'ring Angel's ſhed,
From their bleſt pinions, the nectareous dews
Of rich immortal Fame: From theſe the Muſe

Oft ſteals ſome precious drops, and ſkilful blends
With thoſe the lower fountain lends;
Then ſhowers it all on ſome high-favour'd head.
But thou, Elfrida, claim'ſt the genuine due;
Thy worth demands it all,
Pure, and unmixt, on thee the holy drops ſhall fall.
[*Elfrida returns with flowers.*

ELFRIDA, ORGAR, CHORUS,

ELFRIDA. [*looking on the flowers.*

'Tis ſtrange, my Virgins, this ſweet child of Summer,
Silken and ſoft, whoſe breath perfumes the air,
Whoſe gay veſt paints the Morn, ſhould in its boſom
Hide ſuch pollution? Yet 'tis often thus:
All are not as they ſeem.

ORGAR.

Yet hear me, Lady.

ELFRIDA.

Be gone, unmanner'd Stranger, nor purſue me;
Hence from the grove. Know ye this Pilgrim,
Virgins?
On my return I met him here.

CHORUS.

Alas;
We ſaw him here before, and heard his tale,
That mov'd our pity—But I fear me now,
'Twas falſe; ſome ſpy perchance, and may have
heard—

ORGAR.

I have; yet not for that are you betray'd.
Fair Excellence, my heart is bound unto you,
I feel a tender intereſt in your welfare,
Tender as Fathers feel.

ELFRIDA.

ELFRIDA.

As Fathers feel;
That well-known voice, and ah! that look—

ORGAR.

Elfrida.

ELFRIDA.

Yes it is him, it is my Father, Virgins.
Support me, or I faint! O wherefore, Sir?—

ORGAR.

Take courage, Daughter; my parental fondneſs
Prompted this viſit. Thus I came diſguis'd,
To learn the cauſe of my dear child's confinement:
And I have learnt it.

ELFRIDA.

Then all's loſt for ever.

ORGAR.

Thou know'ſt, Elfrida, next my houſe's honor,
Thy peace has ever been my deareſt care.
But ſuch an inſult—No: I cannot brook it.
So black a fraud! By all my anceſtors,
By Belin's ſhade I will have ample vengeance.

ELFRIDA.

Alas, I know too well your dreadful purpoſe;
I knew it at the firſt. Yes, he muſt fall.
Yet pardon me, if my poor trembling heart
Puts up I know not what of pray'rs and vows
To ev'ry pitying ſaint. Celeſtial Guardians
Of nuptial Conſtancy! O bend from Heav'n
Your ſtar-crown'd heads, and hear a wretched woman,
That begs ye ſave, from a dread father's rage,
Her lord, her huſband.

ORGAR.

ORGAR.

Husband! 'Sdeath what husband?
Is *Athelwold* thy husband? Sooner call
Th' impeached thief true master of the booty
He stole, or murder'd for. Disdain the Villain;
And help me to revenge thee.

CHORUS.

Think, great Earl;
What sanctimonious ties restrain your daughter.
Did she not swear before the hallow'd shrine
Eternal fealty to this her Lord?
Yet say, that he deceiv'd her; shall her truth
Dare to revenge? No, Sir, in highest heav'n
Vengeance 'mid storms and tempests sits enshrin'd,
Vested in robes of light'ning, and there sleeps,
Unwak'd but by th' incens'd Almighty's call.
Oh! let not Man presume to take unbid
That dread vicegerency.

ORGAR.

Peace, Virgins, peace.
Not ev'n the saws of Druids or of Bards
Have weight with me, when insults high as this
Rouse my just indignation. Hear me, Daughter,
You went to search for flow'rs, to blot your charms
With their dun hue. Yes, thou shalt search for flow'rs,
Yet shall they be the loveliest of the spring;
Flow'rs, that entangling in thine auburn hair,
Or blushing 'mid the whiteness of thy bosom,
May, to the power of every native grace,
Give double life and lustre. Haste, my child,
Array thyself in thy most gorgeous garb,

And ſee each jewel, which my Love procur'd thee,
Dart its full radiance. More than all, put on
The nobler ornament of winning ſmiles,
And kind inviting glances.

ELFRIDA.

Never, never;
When this true heart renounces ATHELWOLD,
May equitable heav'n—

ORGAR.

Away with vows;
And with a duteous, and attentive Ear,
Liſten to my perſuaſions. Much I wiſh
Perſuaſions might prevail, that, not compell'd
To uſe a father's juſt prerogative,
My will may meet with thy unforc'd obedience.
Follow me, on thy duty.

ELFRIDA.

Cruel Father,
That duty ſhall obey you; I will follow:
Yet dread as is that frown, dreadful as death,
It ſhall not ſhake the tenor of my faith;
Living or dead I ſtill am ATHELWOLD's.
[*Exeunt Orgar and Elfrida.*

SEMICHORUS.

Horror! Horror!
The Pen of Fate, dipt in its deepeſt gall,
Perhaps on that ill-omen'd wall,
Now writes th'event of this tremendous day.
O! that our weaker ſight
Could read the myſtic characters, and ſpy
What to the unpurg'd, mortal Eye,
Is hid in endleſs Night.

SEMI-

SEMICHORUS.

Suſpenſe! thou frozen gueſt, be gone.
The wretch, whoſe rugged bed
Is ſpread on thorns, more ſoftly reſts his head,
Than he that ſinks amid the cycnet's down,
If thou, tormenting fiend, be nigh,
To prompt his ſtarting tear, his ceaſeleſs ſigh,
His wiſh, his prayer, his vow for ling'ring certainty.

CHORUS.

But hark! that certainty arrives. Methought
I heard the winding horn. I did not err;
The King is near at hand. This quick approach
Will ſure prevent this proud Earl's cruel purpoſe.
Yet what of that? Does her fair form require
The blazon of rich veſture? Genuine beauty
Nor aſks, nor needs it: Negligence alone
Is its bright diadem, and artleſs eaſe
Its robe of Tyrian tincture. Say, my Siſters,
Shall we ſalute this monarch with a hymn
Of Feſtival and Joy! Alas, ſuch joy
Ill ſuits our trembling hearts, and weeping eyes.
And now 'twere vain; for ſee, the King approaches.

EDGAR, ATHELWOLD, CHORUS,

EDGAR.

No, *Athelwold*; not from a partial blindneſs,
Or for the mode and guiſe of Courteſy,
Are we thus large in praiſe; in our true judgment,
This Caſtle is not more kind Nature's debtor
For its delicious ſite, than 'tis to thee
For this ſo goodly ſtructure. From its baſe,
Ev'n to yon turret's trim, and taper ſpires,
All is of choiceſt Maſonry. Each part

Doth

Doth boaſt a ſeparate grace; but Ornament,
Tho' here the richeſt that the eye can note,
Is us'd, not laviſh'd; Art ſeems generous here,
Yet not a prodigal. But ah! my Earl, [*ſeeing the Chorus.*
What living charms are here? Thy caſtle's beauty
Muſt not detain me from this lovelier proſpect.
Your pardon, fair Ones, that my wayward Eye
Paid not at firſt, where firſt was ſurely due,
Its homage to your Graces.

ATHELWOLD.

Heav'ns! they weep.
What may this mean? Some dread and unſeen chance
Has counter-work'd my ſafety.

EDGAR.

Whence this ſilence;
Why are your lovely heads thus bow'd with ſadneſs?
Beſhrew my heart, my Lord, but this is ſtrange.
I know thee, Earl, and know thy gentleneſs,
More prone t'obey, than lord it o'er the ſex;
Elſe ſhould I gueſs this ſorrow had its riſe
From ſome diſcourteous treatment.

CHORUS.

No, dread Sov'reign;
He is the nobleſt, gentleſt, beſt of maſters;
And may your Love reward———

ORGAR, ATHELWOLD, EDGAR, CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

Death to my hopes!

ORGAR.

ORGAR.

Yes, Villain, start; but let this vengeful arm
Arrest thy baseness; would to heav'n its strength,
Thus grasping thee, could open thy false breast,
And bare thy heart to the sham'd eye of Day.

EDGAR.

Patience, hot Man. What art thou?

ORGAR.

Earl of Devon!
Pardon me, Prince; that this my honest rage
O'er leaps obedient duty. I am wrong'd,
Yet that's but small; for know much-injur'd Prince,
Thy wrongs as well as mine both call for justice.
Yes, Sir, I here, on a true subject's oath,
Proclaim Earl Athelwold a faithless traitor.

EDGAR.

Ha! what is this? Renounce the word, old Earl;
Thy length of years hath forc'd thee, sure, to press
The verge of dotage. *Athelwold!* what *Athelwold*
A faithless traitor! Perish the suspicion.
Never before did word, or thought, or look,
Give doubt of his distinguish'd loyalty.
Dotage alone could frame the accusation.

ORGAR.

I do not dote, thank Heav'n, my faculties
Are yet my own, unblemish'd and unhurt.
Would so my Daughter were!

EDGAR.

What is his drift?

ATHELWOLD.

Better, my royal Lord, you mark'd him not;
The wayward Earl is—

ORGAR.

ORGAR.

What, audacious Villain!

I will be heard.

EDGAR.

Go too, thou choleric Lord!

ORGAR.

When thou haſt heard me, *Edgar*, call me choleric.

EDGAR.

Speak then, and briefly.

ORGAR.

Once, my ſacred Liege,
I had a daughter, duteous as e'er crown'd
A Father's wiſh, and lovely as could warm
A youth to am'rous tranſports. This, my Lord,
You learnt long ſince from noble *Ardulph*'s praiſes,
And fir'd with his deſcription, ſent this Earl,
This faithful Earl, t'invite her to your throne.

EDGAR.

No, *Orgar*, not t'invite her to our throne,
Simply to note her beauty was his errand.

ORGAR.

Yes, he did note it, ſtampt it for his own.
But why this parley? Enter, Sir, theſe gates,
And let *Elfrida*'s features be the book,
Where you may read the ſtory of his falſhood,
Ev'n on the inſtant.

EDGAR,

Noble Lord, lead on
We'll follow to the trial. I will humour
The Earl's hot temper. He has heard, my friend,

F We

We meant t'exalt his daughter, and for that
His partial fondneſs, link'd with his ambition,
Levels this rage at thee. Attend us, Lords.
[*Exeunt Edgar, Orgar, &c.*

CHORUS, ATHELWOLD.

CHORUS.

My Lord, the King is enter'd: ſtand not thus
In mute and fixt diſtreſs.

ATHELWOLD.

Away, away;
What! can a Man that thinks ſuch thoughts as I do
Have pow'r of word or motion? ſpeak to me;
Inform me all. What ſaid ſhe when I left her?
How came her Father hither? how did ſhe
Greet his arrival? Say, was ſhe compell'd,
Or did her free, and voluntary voice,
Tell all the ſtory? Did ſhe marſhal him,
To this his deed of vengeance?

CHORUS.

Deareſt Maſter,
Elfrida told him not: his own deceit
Was his informer. Here the Earl arriv'd
Early at morn, in mean and pilgrim weeds,
All like an ancient, toil-worn traveller;
And with a tale told in ſuch piteous ſtrain,
Fraught with ſuch ſad and moving circumſtance,
With woes ſo well diſſembled; that our ſoftneſs
Suffer'd him enter this cloſe bow'r for reſt,
Which he adapting to his prying purpoſe,
Thence learnt the ſecret. This our diſobedience,
We own—

ATHEL-

ATHELWOLD.

Was my perdition. Yet 'tis well;
I blame ye not; it was Heav'n's juſtice, Virgins;
This brought him hither, this annull'd your faith.
I do not think, you purpos'd my deſtruction;
But yet you have deſtroy'd me. O Elfrida,
And art thou faithful? This my jealous eye
Thought it had markt ſome ſpeck of change upon thee;
Thought it had found, what might have made thy loſs
Somewhat within endurance. 'Tis not ſo;
And this thy purity but ſerves t'augment
The ſum of my diſtractions. Meet me, Edgar,
With thy rais'd ſword: be merciful and ſudden——

[*Exit Athelwold.*

CHORUS.

ODE.

Say, will no white-rob'd Son of Light,
Swift-darting from his heav'nly height,
Here deign to take his hallow'd ſtand;
Here wave his amber locks; unfold
His pinions cloth'd with downy gold;
Here ſmiling ſtretch his tutelary wand?
And you, ye hoſt of Saints, for ye have known
Each dreary path in Life's perplexing maze,
Tho' now ye circle yon eternal throne
With harpings high of inexpreſſive praiſe,
Will not your train deſcend in radiant ſtate,
To break with Mercy's beam this gathering cloud of Fate?
'Tis ſilence all. No Son of Light
Darts ſwiftly from his heav'nly height;

No train of radiant Saints deſcend.
" Mortals, in vain ye hope to find,
" If guilt, if fraud has ſtain'd your mind,
" Or Saint to hear, or Angel to defend."
So Truth proclaims. I hear the ſacred ſound
Burſt from the centre of her burning throne:
Where aye ſhe ſits with ſtar-wreath'd luſtre crown'd:
A bright Sun claſps her adamantine zone.
So Truth proclaims: her awful voice I hear:
With many a ſolemn pauſe it ſlowly meets my ear.

" Attend, ye Sons of Men; attend, and ſay,"
Does not enough of my refulgent ray
Break thro' the veil of your mortality!
Say, does not reaſon in this form deſcry
Unnumber'd, nameleſs glories that ſurpaſs
The Angel's floating pomp, the Seraph's glowing grace?
Shall then your earth-born daughters vie
With me? Shall ſhe, whoſe brighteſt eye
But emulates the diamond's blaze,
Whoſe cheek but mocks the peach's bloom,
Whoſe breath the hyacinth's perfume,
Whoſe melting voice the warbling woodlark's lays,
Shall ſhe be deem'd my rival? Shall a form
Of elemental droſs, of mould'ring clay,
Vie with theſe charms imperial? The poor worm
Shall prove her conteſt vain. Life's little day
Shall paſs, and ſhe is gone: while I appear
Fluſh'd with the bloom of youth thro' Heav'n's eternal year.

Know,

Know, Mortals, know, ere firſt ye ſprung,
Ere firſt theſe orbs in æther hung,
I ſhone amid the heav'nly throng.
Theſe eyes beheld Creation's day,
This voice began the choral lay,
And taught Archangels their triumphant ſong.
Pleas'd I ſurvey'd bright Nature's gradual birth,
Saw infant Light with kindling luſtre ſpread,
Soft vernal fragrance clothe the flow'ring earth,
And Ocean heave on his extended bed;
Saw the tall pine aſpiring pierce the ſky,
The tawny Lion ſtalk, the rapid Eagle fly.

Laſt, Man aroſe, erect in youthful grace,
Heav'ns hallow'd image ſtampt upon his face,
And, as he roſe, the high beheſt was giv'n,
" That I alone of all the hoſt of heav'n,
" Should reign Protectreſs of the godlike Youth."
Thus the Almighty ſpake: he ſpake and call'd me
Truth.

ATHELWOLD, EDWIN, CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

Baniſh me! No. I'll die. For why ſhould Life
Remain a lonely lodger in that breaſt
Which Honor leaves deſerted? Idle breath!
Thou can'ſt not fill ſuch vacancy. Be gone.
This ſword ſhall free——

CHORUS.

O ſhame to Fortitude!
Shame to that manly paſſion, which inſpires
Its vigorous warmth, when the bleak blaſts of Fate
Would chill the ſoul. O call the ready virtue

Quick to thy aid, for ſhe is ever near thee;
Is ever prompt to ſpread her ſevenfold ſhield
O'er noble breaſts.

ATHELWOLD.

And but o'er noble breaſts;
Not o'er the breaſt which livid Infamy
Indelibly has ſpotted. O ſhame, ſhame.
Sword, rid me of the thought.

CHORUS.

Forbear, forbear;
Think what a ſea of deep perdition whelms
The wretch's trembling ſoul, who launches forth
Unlicenc'd to Eternity. Think, think;
And let the thought reſtrain thy impious hand.
The race of Man is one vaſt marſhall'd army,
Summon'd to paſs the ſpacious realms of Time,
Their leader the Almighty. In that march
Ah who may quit his poſt? when high in Air
The choſ'n Archangel rides, whoſe right hand weilds
Th'imperial ſtandard of heav'n's providence,
Which, dreadly ſweeping thro' the vaulted ſky,
O'erſhadows all creation.

ATHELWOLD.

I was once——
Yes, I was once (I have his royal word for't)
A man of ſuch try'd faith, ſuch ſteddy honor,
As mock'd all doubt and ſcruple.—What a change!
Now muſt that unſtain'd, virgin character,
Be doom'd to groſs and hourly proſtitution,
Sating the luſt of ſlander; and my wife,
My chaſte *Elfrida!* O diſtraction, no,
I'll fly to ſave her.

EDWIN.

EDWIN.

Stay, my deareſt Maſter;
You ruſh on inſtant death.

ATHELWOLD.

I mean it, ſlave,
And would'ſt thou hinder me?

EDWIN.

Yes, Sir, I hold
'Tis duty to my king, and love to you,
Thus to oppoſe your entrance.

ATHELWOLD.

What, thou traitor!
Thy pardon, *Edwin*, I forgot myſelf;
Forgot, that I ſtood here a baniſh'd Man;
And that this gate was ſhut againſt its Maſter.
And yet this gate leads to my dear *Elfrida*;
Can it be barr'd to me? O Earth, cold Earth,
Upon whoſe breaſt I caſt this load of mis'ry,
Bear it awhile; and you, ye aged Oaks,
Ye venerable Fathers of this wood,
Who oft have cool'd beneath your arching ſhades
My humble anceſtors, oft ſeen them hie
To your ſpread umbrage, from yon ſultry field,
Their ſcene of honeſt labour, ſhade, ah! ſhade,
The laſt, the wretchedeſt of all their race.
I will not long pollute ye; for I mean
To pay beneath your conſecrated gloom
A ſacrifice to honor, and the ghoſts
Of thoſe progenitors, who ſternly frown
On me their baſe deſcendant.

EDWIN.

See, ye Virgins,
How Horror ſhades his brow; how fixt his eye;
Heav'ns! what deſpair ——

CHORUS.

Edwin, 'tis ever thus
With noble minds, if chance they ſlide to folly;
Remorſe ſtings deeper, and relentleſs Conſcience
Pours more of Gall into the bitter cup
Of their ſevere repentance.

ATHELWOLD.

'Tis reſolv'd:
I'll enter and demand a ſecond audience.
And yet how vain! Ere I can reach his ear,
His ready train will ſtop me, and, with all
The cruel punctuality of office,
So prompt to act 'gainſt fallen favourites,
Diſmiſs me with reproof. — Surely I heard her.
Was't not *Elfrida*'s voice? 'Tis ſhe herſelf.

ELFRIDA, EDGAR, ATHELWOLD, ORGAR, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

No, I will once more claſp him to my boſom.
I will not be withheld. I will o'ertake him.
Will go with him to exile. Hah, my Huſband!
So quickly found? They thought to tear me from thee;
But we will part no more.

EDGAR.

Take heed, *Elfrida*,
This ill-tim'd fondneſs may recall the fate

I juſt

I juſt now freed him from; who loves like me
Can ill brook this. Or quit him, or he dies.

ATHELWOLD.

Yes, let me die! Death is my deareſt wiſh.
Quit me, *Elfrida!* leave me to my fate.
'Tis juſt, 'tis juſt. Thus to my ſov'reign's ſword
Freely I bare my breaſt. Strike, injur'd Prince;
But do not baniſh me.

ELFRIDA.

What, *Athelwold*,
Is then the life, on whoſe dear preſervation
Elfrida's peace depends, not worth the ſaving?
Die then. But ere thy murd'rer ſtrikes the ſtroke,
Let me inform him, that his act deſtroys
No ſingle life.

EDGAR.

By heav'n ſhe loves the traitor
Beyond all hope of change—

ELFRIDA.

No, *Athelwold*,
Thou ſhalt not die. That pauſe in royal *Edgar*
Beſpeaks forgiveneſs. He will ſoon relent;
And mercy, flowing from his gracious tongue,
Seal thy full pardon. Let us kneel, my Lord;
Seize the important moment; kneel together;
And, as theſe ſtreaming eyes and lifted hands
Employ each act of ſilent ſupplication,
Do thou recount—Ah! no, thy modeſt tongue
Could never tell ev'n half the gallant ſtory.
Be ſilent then. Let *Edgar's* ſelf reflect;

For well I know his Mem'ry writes thy Virtues
Upon its faireſt page. Yes, let him weigh
All thy paſt deeds of loyalty and faith,
'Gainſt this ſo light a fault.

EDGAR.

So light a fault!
Had he diſlodg'd my richeſt coffer'd treaſures,
Diſpers'd ſedition's poiſon 'mid my troops,
Or aim'd with daring and rebellious hand
To ſnatch theſe regal honours from my brow,
I ſooner could have pardon'd.

ATHELWOLD.

Ceaſe, *Elfrida*,
My doom is juſt—Yes, royal Sir, I go
To baniſhment. I do deſerve to breathe,
Deſerve to bear this load of life about me,
For many years; to lengthen out my age,
Liſt'ning the hourly knell of curſt remembrance,
Whoſe leaden ſtroke ſhall tell to my ſad ſoul
That I was faithful once.

ELFRIDA.

O flinty *Edgar*,
What! will this penitence not move thee? Know
There is a roſe-lip'd Seraph ſits on high,
Who ever bends his holy ear to earth
To mark the voice of Penitence, to catch
Her ſolemn ſighs, to tune them to his harp,
And echo them in harmonies divine
Up to the throne of Grace. Ev'n Heav'n is won
By Penitence, and ſhall Heav'n's ſubſtitute,
Shall *Edgar* ſcorn——

EDGAR.

Ceaſe, ceaſe, thou beauteous pleader!
Ah far too beauteous! Wouldſt thou gain thy ſuit,
Why glows that vermeil lip? why rolls that eye
Bright as the ray of Morn? Why in each geſture
Such inexpreſſive graces, but becauſe
They're native all, and will not be conceal'd?
Elſe ſure each charm betrays him, and becomes
An advocate, whoſe ſilent eloquence
Pleads 'gainſt thy voice, and foils its tuneful power.
Traitor! was this the face which thy falſe tongue
Profan'd as vulgar? This ſuch common beauty
As the fair eye of Day beheld each hour
In ev'ry clime he lighted? Baſe diſſembler,
This inſtant quit our realm.

ELFRIDA.

O ſtay thee, *Edgar*,
And once more hear me. At thy feet I fall
As earneſt, and diſtreſt a ſupplicant,
As e'er embrac'd the knees of Majeſty.
O ſpare thy Country's guardian, *Edgar*, ſpare
Thy cloſeſt, ſureſt friend. Let not one fault,
Cancel his thouſand, thouſand acts of faith.
Alas! I fall to vaineſt repetition.
Grief, whelming grief drowns all my faculties,
And leaves me nought but tears.

EDGAR.

Riſe, riſe, *Elfrida*.

ELFRIDA.

Shall he then live?

EDGAR.

He ſhall, he ſhall, my fair.
If ſo he quit the realm within the ſpace
Our ſentence limited.

ELFRIDA.

O ſtop not there;
That ſentence will be death to *Athelwold.*
Think, for thou know'ſt full well his gentle nature,
Can he ſupport the rigour of this doom?
Can he, who liv'd but in thy gracious ſmiles,
Who'd pine, if chance thoſe ſmiles a ſingle hour
Were dealt him thriftily; think, can he bear
The infamy of exile?

EDGAR.

Hear me, *Athelwold.*
Did I not ſhow'r on thy much-favour'd head
My thickeſt honours, and with gift ſo ready
As out-run all requeſt? Did I not hold thee
Still in ſuch open confidence of friendſhip,
Such love as———

ATHELWOLD.

Sooner ſtab me than repeat it.

EDGAR.

Yet give me hearing. I repeat not this
To taunt or gall thee. On my ſoul thy worth
Did o'ertop all thoſe honours, and thy zeal
Kept pace with my beſt love. Nor 'till this deed—
But ſuch a deed! look there, look on that face.
Thou know'ſt me, *Athelwold*, haſt ſeen me gaze
On a ſoft yielding fair one, 'till mine eye

Shot

Shot flames. Perdition ſeize me, if this heart
Knew Love 'till now.

ATHELWOLD.

I ſee it plain, my Liege,
Nor ſay I aught to leſſen my Offence.
No, here I kneel, Oh! caſt but on my miſ'ry
One kind forgiving glance; this ready ſword
Shall expiate all.

ELFRIDA.

Ah! will you? muſt he die?

EDGAR.

No, ſtay thee, *Athelwold*, and ſheath thy ſword;
I never yet (ſave but this hour of rage)
Deem'd thee my ſubject. Thou wert ſtill my friend;
And, injur'd as I am, thou ſtill art ſuch:
I do forego the word; to baniſh thee
Or ſeal thy death, tranſcends a friend's juſt right.

ELFRIDA.

Ah generous deed! ah godlike goodneſs! Virgins,
The king will pardon him. Wake each high note
Of praiſe, and gratitude, teach *Edgar*'s name
To Harewood's furtheſt Echo. O my Sov'reign!
What words can ſpeak my thanks——

EDGAR.

Nay, check theſe tranſports,
Leſt, if I ſee thee thus, my ſoul forget
Its milder purpoſe. I will leave thee, Lady;
Yet firſt my lips muſt preſs this gentle hand,
And breathe one ſoft ſigh of no common fervor.
Now on, my Lords—Fair wonder of thy ſex,

Adieu.

Adieu. We'll ſtraight into our realm of Mercia.
Yet firſt, as was our purpoſe, thro' this foreſt,
We'll chace the nimble Roebuck; may the ſport
More pleaſe us, than we hope. Earl *Athelwold*,
Thou too muſt join our train. Follow us ſtraight.
[*Exit Edgar, &c.*

ATHELWOLD.

I do, my Liege. ELFRIDA, I have much
For thy lov'd ear, and have but one farewel
To tell it all——And yet——

ELFRIDA.

Ah loiter not,
It may enrage. Farewel. Be ſure, take heed
I come not in your talk; avoid ev'n thinking;
Check ev'n the ſighs of abſence. Haſte, my Earl,
Oh haſte thee, as thou lov'ſt thy conſtant wife.
[*Exit Athelwold.*

ORGAR, ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

ORGAR.

Thy conſtant wife! ah, ſtain of all thy race,
Degen'rate Girl! Henceforth be *Orgar* deem'd
Of ſoft, and dove-like temper, who could ſee
A child of his ſtoop to ſuch vile abaſement,
And yet forbore juſt wrath; forbore to draw
That blood ſhe had defil'd from her mean veins.
But ſure thou art not mine; ſome Elve or Faye
Did ſpirit away my babe, and by curſt charms
Thee in her cradle plac'd. Nay hang not on me:
Dry, dry thy tears, they've done their office amply.
Edgar has pardon'd him. No, by my Earldom,
I cannot think of majeſty thus meanly.

He'll

He'll yet avenge it: What if chance he ſhould not?
That ſtops not me; I have a heart, an arm,
A ſword can do me juſtice.

ELFRIDA.

Ah! my Lord,
Are you ſtill mercileſs? Alas, I hop'd———

ORGAR.

What could'ſt thou hope, *Elfrida*? could'ſt thou think
I e'er would pardon his vile perfidy,
Or thine ignoble ſoftneſs?

ELFRIDA.

Deareſt Father,
Frown not thus ſternly on me. I would fain
Touch your relenting ſoul, fain win your heart
To fatherly forgiveneſs. For thro' life
I've oft had pleaſing proof how that forgiveneſs
Stoop'd to my fond perſuaſion. But I fear
Perſuaſion now has left me. My ſad thoughts
Are all on wing, all following *Athelwold*,
Like unſeen miniſtring ſpirits:—Pardon, Sir,
That frown ſhall check me, I'll not mention him;
I will but plead for my own weakneſs, plead
For that ſoft ſympathy of ſoul, which you
Deem baſe and ſervile. Baſe perhaps it might be,
Were I of bolder ſex. But I, alas!———
Ah pardon me, if Nature ſtampt me Woman;
Gave me a heart ſoft, gentle, prone to pity,
And very fearful. Fearful, ſure with cauſe
At this dread hour, when if one hapleſs word,
One ſigh break forth unbid, it may rekindle

The

The Monarch's rage——What has my phrenzy ſaid?
I've wander'd from my meaning. Deareſt Virgins,
My raſh tongue more inflames him. O aſſiſt me,
Ye are not thus oppreſt with inward horror:
Kneel, plead, perſuade, convince——

CHORUS.

Alas, my miſtreſs,
What may a ſervant's accents do t'appeaſe
This furious Earl?

ORGAR.

Ye well may ſpare them: Maidens,
Know my firm ſoul's reſolv'd, and be my heart
As baſe as *Athelwold*'s, if it foregoes
The honeſt reſolution. Think what I,
What Britain ſuffers from this traitor's fraud:
Had *Edgar* took my daughter to his bed,
Our Britiſh Line, which now is doom'd to ſink
In vile ſubjection, had again aſſum'd
The pall of royalty, with half its power,
In time perchance the whole. But this falſe Saxon
Shall with his life repay me. Here I'll wait
His firſt return, and in his own domain
Give him fair combat. I have known the time
When this good arm had hardihood enough
For thrice his prowefs. What is loſt thro' age,
My juſt cauſe ſhall ſupply; and he ſhall fall
As did the traitor *Oſwald*, whoſe bold tongue
Defam'd me to King *Athelſtan*: To the ground
My ſharp launce nail'd the caitiff.

[*Exit Orgar.*

ELFRIDA,

ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

Think, my Lord,
Will *Athelwold*, will he enter thoſe liſts,
Where conqueſt would be parricide? Alas,
He hears me not. Go, thou obdurate Man.
A daughter's tears will but the more provoke thee.
I will not follow him. No, poor *Elfrida!*
All thou canſt do is here to ſtand, and weep,
And feel that thou art wretched.

CHORUS.

Deareſt Miſtreſs,
Reſtrain this flood of tears, perhaps———

ELFRIDA.

Perhaps!
Ah! mock me not with hopes.

CHORUS.

We do not mean it.
For Hope, tho' 'tis pale ſorrow's only cordial,
Has yet a dull and opiate quality,
Enfeebling what it lulls. It ſuits not you;
For, as we fear———

ELFRIDA.

Do you too fear? Alas!
I flatter'd my poor ſoul that all its Fears
Were Grief's diſtemper'd coinage, that my Love
R[illegible] cauſeleſs apprehenſions, and at length
Edgar would quite forgive. I do bethink me,
My joy broke forth too raſhly. When they left us,

His

His ſafety was not half ſecur'd; my pleading
Was not half heard; I ſhould have follow'd *Edgar*,
Claim'd more full pardon, forc'd him to embrace
My ſorrowing Lord.

CHORUS.

We fear that ſorrow more
Than *Edgar*'s rage. We fear his fallen Virtue.
Self-condemnation works moſt ſtrongly on him,
Ev'n to Deſpondency. Ev'n at his pardon,
No joy fluſh'd on his cheek; we mark'd him well,
He ſhew'd no ſign of welcome. No, he took it
As who ſhould ſay, " To give me aught but Death
" Is a poor boon unwiſh'd and unaccepted."
Too much we fear he'll do ſome impious Act——

ELFRIDA.

What, on his life? I thought I had explor'd
Each various face of danger: this eſcap'd me.
How miſs'd I this? It ſuits his courage highly;
Suits to his fix'd remorſe——But yet he will not,
No, *Athelwold*, thou wilt not kill *Elfrida*.

CHORUS.

O may his love preſerve him: may theſe ſhades
Receive him ſoon in peace. To this bleſt end
You ſure ſhould ſtrive to calm your Father's rage;
At leaſt not ſuffer him, as now, retir'd
To brook o'er his revenge. For know, *Elfrida*,
Beneath the ſilent gloom of Solitude
Tho' Peace can ſit and ſmile; tho' meek Content
Can keep the chearful tenor of her ſoul,
Ev'n in the lonelieſt ſhades; yet let not Wrath

Approach,

Approach, let black revenge keep far aloof,
Or ſoon they flame to Madneſs.

ELFRIDA.

True, my Virgins;
Attend me then: I'll try each winning art:
Tho' ill ſuch art becomes me, yet I'll aim it.——
Hark—whence that noiſe? I heard ſome haſty footſteps.

CHORUS.

O Heavens! 'tis *Edwin.*

ELFRIDA, EDWIN, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

Edwin, ah! that look
Beſpeaks too well the horror of thy errand.
Tell it me all.

EDWIN.

Alas!——

ELFRIDA.

Nay, do not pauſe.
Tell it me all. I think it will not kill me.
Repeat each circumſtance. I'm ready, *Edwin*,
Ev'n for the worſt.

EDWIN.

Then hear that worſt, *Elfrida.*
Soon as the ſtag had left yon weſtward thicket,
The King diſmiſs'd his Lords, each ſev'ral ways,
To their beſt ſport, bidding Earl *Athelwold*,
Lord *Ardulph*, and myſelf, attend his perſon.
Thus parted from the reſt, the Monarch pierc'd
A darkling dell, which opened in a Lawn

Thick ſet with elm around. Suddenly here
He turn'd his ſteed, and cry'd, " This place beſits
Our purpoſe well."

ELFRIDA.

Purpoſe! what purpoſe, *Edwin?*
'Twas predetermin'd then, diſſembling tyrant!
How could I truſt, or hope———

EDWIN.

Yet give me hearing:
Thus with a grave compoſure, and calm eye,
King *Edgar* ſpake. Now hear me, *Athelwold*;
Thy King has pardon'd this thy trait'rous act:
From all diſloyal baſeneſs to thy prince
Thou ſtand'ſt abſolv'd; yet, know, there ſtill remains
Somewhat to cancel more. As man to man,
As friend to friend, now, *Athelwold* I call thee
Straight to defend thy life with thy good ſword.
Nay, anſwer not; defend it gallantly:
If thy arm proſper, this my dying tongue
Shall pardon thee, and bleſs thee. If thou fall'ſt,
Thy parting breath muſt to my right reſign
Elfrida's beauties. At the word, both drew,
Both fought; but *Athelwold*'s was ill-play'd paſſion.
He aim'd his falchion at the Monarch's head,
Only to leave his own brave breaſt defenceleſs.
And on the inſtant *Edgar*'s rapid ſword
Pierc'd my dear maſter's heart. He fell to earth,
And falling cry'd, " This wound atones for all
" *Edgar*, thus full aveng'd, will pardon me,
" And my true wife with chaſte, connubial tears,
" Embalm my memory." He ſmil'd, and dy'd.

ELFRIDA.

ELFRIDA.

Nay, come not round me, Virgins, nor ſupport me.
I do not ſwoon, nor weep. I call not heav'n
T'avenge my wretchedneſs. I do not wiſh
This tyrant's hand may wither with cold palſies.
No, I am very patient. Heav'n is juſt!
And, when the meaſure of his crimes is full,
Will bare its red right arm, and launce its lightnings.
'Till then, ye elements, reſt: and thou firm Earth,
Ope not thy yawning jaws, but let this Monſter
Stalk his due time on thine affrighted ſurface.
Yes, let him ſtill go on; ſtill execute
His ſavage purpoſes, and daily make
More widows weep, as I do. Fooliſh Eyes!
Why flow ye thus unbidden? What have tears
To do with grief like mine?

CHORUS.

Help, help, my Siſters,
To bear her to the caſtle.

ORGAR, ELFRIDA, EDWIN, CHORUS.

ORGAR.

As I paſt,
Methought I heard a ſound of loud lament;
Elfrida, ah!

ELFRIDA.

Is not my father there?
Withhold me not; I'll fall at his dear feet.
O Sir! behold your child thus lowly proſtrate;
Avenge her wrongs, avenge your poor *Elfrida*,
Your helpleſs, widow'd Daughter.

ORGAR.

ORGAR.

Widow'd Daughter!
What is he ſlain?

ELFRIDA.

Inhoſpitably butcher'd;
The Tyrant's ſavage ſelf—Stand you thus cool?
Where is the Britiſh ſpirit, where the fire
Of Belin's race?——O fooliſhneſs of grief!
Alas, I had forgot: had *Edgar* ſpar'd him,
That ſword, to which my madneſs call'd for vengeance,
Ere long was meant to do the bloody deed,
And make the murder parricide. Have I
No friend to do me right?

ORGAR.

Thou haſt, my Child;
I am thy friend, thy father. Truſt my care.
Edwin, a word. Retire, my deareſt Daughter:
Virgins, conduct her in.

ELFRIDA.

My Father, No.
What do you do? I muſt not be withheld.
I'll to yon bloody grove, and claſp my Huſband,
My murder'd Huſband. Why reſtrain me, Sir?
Can my ſad eye dart fire thro' his cold breaſt,
And light up life anew?

ORGAR.

Go in, my child,
And ſeek Tranquillity.

ELFRIDA.

Tranquillity!
I know her well; ſhe is Death's pale-ey'd ſiſter;
She's

She's now in yonder grove closing the lids
Of my poor *Athelwold*. That office done,
She'll bear his soul upon her gentle plumes
Up to the realms of Joy. I'll follow them:
I know he'd have it so: He'll not be blest,
Ev'n on his throne of bliss, till I am with him.

CHORUS.

This way, my dearest Mistress.

ELFRIDA.

Hold, nay hold;
Croud not around me. Let me pause awhile.
Albina, thou alone shalt join my mis'ry;
I've much to utter to thy friendly ear.
Lead on, thou gentle maid; thy single arm
Shall prop my trembling frame; thy single voice
Speak peace to my afflictions.

[*Exit with the principal Virgin.*

ORGAR, EDWIN, SEMICHORUS.

ORGAR.

On your lives,
Virgins, let no disturbing step approach her.
Say, *Edwin* (for I guess 'twas you that brought
These tidings hither) where was royal *Edgar*,
When late you left him?

EDWIN.

At my master's side
Repentant of the stroke.

ORGAR.

Comes he not back
To Harewood?

SEMI-

SEMICHORUS.

Heav'n forbid! *Elfrida*'s brain
Would madden at the ſight.

ORGAR.

Miſtake not, Virgins;
I did not mean at this diſtreſsful hour
The King ſhould ſee my daughter.

SEMICHORUS.

No, for pity,
Do not profane this ſabbath of her grief.
O be her ſorrow ſacred!

ORGAR.

Fear not, Virgins;
Her peace is my beſt care, and, to enſure it,
I'll haſte this inſtant, by young *Edwin*'s guidance
To find the Monarch. Some four miles from Hare-
wood
Stands old *Egbert*'s caſtle, my faſt friend.
With him will I perſuade the King to ſojourn,
'Till my child's grief abate; that too to ſpeed
Be it your buſineſs, Virgins. Watching ever
Each happy interval, when your ſoft tongues
May hint his praiſes, 'till by practice won
She bear their fuller blazon. *Elfrida's* welfare
Requires this friendly office at your hands;
And *Edgar*'s virtues bear ſuch genuine luſtre
That Truth itſelf directs———

[*Exit Orgar*

SEMICHORUS.

As Truth directs,
So only ſhall we act. This day has ſhewn

What

What dire effects await its violation.
Straight is the road of Truth, and plain;
And, tho' across the sacred way
Ten thousand erring footsteps stray,
'Tis ours to walk direct,
And, with sage caution circumspect,
Pace slowly through the solemn scene.

[The principal Virgin returns.

SEMICHORUS.

Has *Orgar* left the grove?

SEMICHORUS.

He has, my sister.

SEMICHORUS.

Then hear, and aid *Elfrida*'s last resolve,
Who takes the only way stern Fate has left
To save her plighted faith for ever pure
To her dead *Athelwold.*

SEMICHORUS.

Forbid it, Patience;
Forbid it, that submissive calm of soul,
Which teaches meek-ey'd Piety to smile
Beneath the scourge of Heav'n.

SEMICHORUS.

Ye need not fear it,
She means not self destruction. Thanks to heav'n,
Huge and o'erbearing as her mis'ry is,
It cannot so oblit'rate from her breast
The written rule of duty. Her pure Soul
Means, on the instant, to devote itself
To heav'n and holiness. Assist her straight,
Lest *Edgar*'s presence, and her Father's rage

Prevent the blest intention. See, she comes.
Kneel on each side, devoutly kneel around her;
And breathe some pray'r in high and solemn strains,
That Angels from their thrones of light may hear,
And ratify her vow.

ELFRIDA, CHORUS.

[*Elfrida kneels, and the Virgins divide into two Troops.*]

SEMICHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear,
Hear from these nether thrones of Light;
And O! in golden characters record
Each firm, immutable, immortal word.
Then wing your solemn flight
Up to the heav'n of heav'ns, and there
Hang the conspicuous tablet high,
'Mid the dread records of Eternity.

ELFRIDA.

Hear first, that *Athelwold*'s sad widow swears
To rear a hallow'd Convent o'er the place,
Where stream'd his blood: there will she weep thro' Life
Immur'd with this chaste throng of Virgins; there
Each day shall six times hear her full-voic'd Choir
Chaunt the slow requiem o'er her martyr'd Lord;
There too, when Midnight lowers with awful gloom
She'll rise observant of the stated call
Of waking Grief, bear the dim livid taper
Along the winding isles, and at the altar
Kiss ev'ry pale shrine with her trembling lips,
Press the cold stone with her bent knee, and call
On sainted *Athelwold*.

SEMI-

SEMICHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear,
Hear from these nether thrones of Light;
And O! in golden characters record
Each firm, immutable, immortal word.
Then wing your solemn flight
Up to the heav'n of heav'ns, and there
Hang the conspicuous tablet high,
'Mid the dread records of Eternity.

ELFRIDA.

Hear next, that *Athelwold*'s sad widow swears
Never to violate the holy vow
She to his truth first plighted; swears to bear
The sober singleness of Widowhood
To her cold grave. If from this chaste resolve
She even in thought should swerve; if gaudy pomp
Or flatt'ring greatness e'er should tempt one wish
To stray beyond this purpose; may that heav'n,
Which hears this vow, punish its violation,
As heav'nly justice ought.

CHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear,
Hear from these nether thrones of light;
And O! in golden characters record
Each firm, immutable, immortal word.
Then wing your solemn flight
Up to the heav'n of heav'ns, and there
Hang the conspicuous tablet high,
Mid the dread records of Eternity.

CARACTACUS:

Written on the MODEL

OF THE

ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY.

First publifhed in the year 1759.

Nos munera Phœbo
Misimus; et lectas DRUIDUM de gente CHOREAS.

MILTON.

The ARGUMENT.

CARACTACUS, *King of the* Silures, *having been defeated by* Ostorius, *the* Roman *Præfect, his Queen taken prisoner, and his Son (as it is supposed) either slain or fled, retired with his only Daughter, and took sanctuary among the* Druids *in* Mona. Ostorius, *after the battle, leaving garrisons in the conquered country, marched to subdue the northern part of* Britain, *and led his troops to the frontiers of the* Brigantes, *then governed by* Cartismandua. *This Queen, dreading the victorious enemy, made a truce with him; one of the conditions of which was, that she should assist the* Romans *in securing the* British *King, that he might be carried to* Rome *to grace the triumph of* Claudius. *She accordingly gave up her two Sons as Hostages, to be sent themselves to* Rome, *in case they did not seduce* Caractacus *from his Sanctuary, to which place they were to be accompanied by* Aulus Didius, *and a sufficient force, to effect that design.*

The Drama opens on their arrival in the consecrated grove, a little before midnight, and about the time when the Druids, *who form the* Chorus, *were preparing the ceremonial of* Caractacus's *admission into their order. The two Princes are seized as spies, and the incidents, consequent upon this, form what is called the* Episode *of the piece. The* Exode, *or Catastrophe, is prepared by the coming of* Arviragus *the King's son, who, having escaped with life in the late battle, had employed the intermediate time in privately collecting his Father's scatter'd forces, to put him again in a condition of facing the enemy. His bravery, in defending his Father and the* Druids, *occasions the* Peripetia, *or change of fortune; and his death, with the final captivity of* Caractacus, *concludes the Tragedy.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AULUS DIDIUS, the Roman General.

VELLINUS }
ELIDURUS } Sons of CARTISMANDUA.

* CHORUS, of DRUIDS and BARDS.

CARACTACUS.

EVELINA, Daughter to CARACTACUS.

ARVIRAGUS, Son to CARACTACUS.

SCENE, MONA.

* The Dramatic part of the Chorus is ſuppoſed to be chiefly ſpoken by the Principal Druid; the Lyrical part ſung by the Bards.

CARACTACUS,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

AULUS DIDIUS, with Romans.

THIS is the ſecret centre of the iſle:
Here, Romans, pauſe, and let the eye of wonder
Gaze on the ſolemn ſcene; behold yon oak,
How ſtern he frowns, and with his broad brown arms
Chills the pale plain beneath him: mark yon altar,
The dark ſtream brawling round its rugged baſe,
Theſe cliffs, theſe yawning caverns, this wide circus,
Skirted with unhewn ſtone: they awe my ſoul,
As if the very Genius of the place
Himſelf appear'd, and with terrific tread
Stalk'd through his drear domain. And yet, my friends,
(If ſhapes like theſe be but the fancy's coinage)
Surely there is a hidden power, that reigns
'Mid the lone majeſty of untam'd nature,
Controuling ſober reaſon; tell me elſe,
Why do theſe haunts of barb'rous ſuperſtition
O'ercome me thus? I ſcorn them yet, they awe me.
Call forth the Britiſh Princes: in this gloom
I mean to ſchool them to our enterprize.

[*Enter Vellinus and Elidurus.*

AULUS DIDIUS, VELLINUS, ELIDURUS.

Ye pledges dear of *Cartiſmandua*'s faith,
Approach! and to mine uninſtructed ear
Explain this ſcene of horror.

ELIDURUS.

Daring Roman,
Know that thou ſtand'ſt on conſecrated ground:
Theſe mighty piles of magic-planted rock,
Thus rang'd in myſtic order, mark the place
Where but at times of holieſt feſtival
The Druid leads his train.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Where dwells the ſeer?

VELLINUS.

In yonder ſhaggy cave; on which the moon
Now ſheds a ſide-long gleam. His brotherhood
Poſſeſs the neighb'ring cliffs.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Yet up the hill
Mine eye deſcries a diſtant range of caves,
Delv'd in the ridges of the craggy ſteep:
And this way ſtill another.

ELIDURUS.

On the left
Reſide the ſages ſkill'd in Nature's lore:
The changeful univerſe, its numbers, powers,
Studious they meaſure, ſave when meditation
Gives place to holy rites: then in the grove
Each hath its rank and function. Yonder grots
Are tenanted by Bards, who nightly thence,

Rob'd

Rob'd in their flowing veſts of innocent white,
Deſcend, with harps that glitter to the moon,
Hymning immortal ſtrains. The ſpirits of air,
Of earth, of water, nay of heav'n itſelf,
Do liſten to their lay: and oft, 'tis ſaid,
In viſible ſhapes dance they a magic round
To the high minſtrelſy. Now, if thine eye
Be ſated with the view, haſte to thy ſhips;
And ply thine oars; for, if the Druids learn
This bold intruſion, thou wilt find it hard
To foil their fury.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Prince, I did not moor
My light-arm'd ſhallops on this dangerous ſtrand
To ſooth a fruitleſs curioſity:
I come in queſt of proud *Caractacus*;
Who, when our veterans put his troops to flight,
Found refuge here.

ELIDURUS.

If here the Monarch reſts,
Preſumptuous Chief! thou might'ſt as well eſſay
To pluck him from yon ſtars: Earth's ample range
Contains no ſurer refuge: underneath
The ſoil we tread, a hundred ſecret paths,
Scoop'd thro' the living rock in winding maze,
Lead to as many caverns, dark, and deep:
In which the hoary ſages act their rites
Myſterious, rites of ſuch ſtrange potency,
As, done in open day, would dim the ſun,
Tho' thron'd in noontide brightneſs. In ſuch dens
He may for life lie hid.

AULUS

AULUS DIDIUS.

We know the task
Most difficult: yet has thy royal mother
Furnish'd the means.

ELIDURUS.

My mother say'st thou, Roman?

AULUS DIDIUS.

In proof of that firm faith she lends to Rome,
She gave you up her honour's hostages.

ELIDURUS.

Se did: and we submit.

AULUS DIDIUS.

To Rome we bear you;
From your dear country bear you; from your joys,
Your loves, your friendships, all your souls hold precious.

ELIDURUS.

And dost thou taunt us, Roman, with our fate?

AULUS DIDIUS.

No, Youth, by heav'n, I would avert that fate.
Wish ye for liberty?

VELLINUS, ELIDURUS.

More than for life.

AULUS DIDIUS.

And would do much to gain it?

VELLINUS.

Name the task.

AULUS DIDIUS.

The task is easy. Haste ye to these Druids:
Tell them ye come, commission'd by your Queen,

To

To ſeek the great *Caractacus*; and call
His valour to her aid, againſt the Legions,
Which, led by our *Oſtorius*, now aſſail
Her frontiers. The late treaty ſhe has ſeal'd
Is yet unknown: and this her royal ſignet,
Which more to maſk our purpoſe was obtain'd,
Shall be your pledge of faith. The eager king
Will gladly take the charge; and, he conſenting,
What elſe remains, but to the Meinaï's ſhore
Ye lead his credulous ſtep? there will we ſeize him:
Bear him to Rome, the ſubſtitute for you,
And give you back to freedom.

VELLINUS.

If the Druids—

AULUS DIDIUS.

If they, or he, prevent this artifice,
Then force muſt take its way: then flaming brands,
And biting axes, weilded by our ſoldiers,
Muſt level theſe thick ſhades, and ſo unlodge
The lurking ſavage.

ELIDURUS.

Gods, ſhall Mona periſh?

AULUS DIDIUS.

Princes, her [illegible] trunk ſhall on the ground
Stretch its gigantic length; unleſs, ere dawn,
Ye lure this untam'd lion to our toils
Go then, and proſper; I ſhall to the ſhips,
And there expect his coming. Youths, remember,
He muſt to Rome to grace great *Cæſar*'s triumph:
Cæſar and Fate demand him at your hand.

[*Exeunt Aulus Didius and Romans.*

ELI-

ELIDURUS, VELLINUS.

ELIDURUS.

And will heav'n ſuffer it? Will the juſt gods,
That tread yon ſpangled pavement o'er our heads,
Look from their ſky and yield him? Will theſe
Druids,
Their ſage vicegerents, not call down the thunder;
And will not inſtant its hot bolts be darted
In ſuch a righteous cauſe? Yes, good old king,
Yes, laſt of Britons, thou art heav'n's own pledge;
And ſhalt be ſuch till death.

VELLINUS.

What means my brother?
Doſt thou refuſe the charge?

ELIDURUS.

Doſt thou accept it?

VELLINUS.

It gives us liberty.

ELIDURUS.

It makes us traitors.
Gods, would *Vellinus* do a deed of baſeneſs?

VELLINUS.

Will *Elidurus* ſcorn the proffer'd boon
Of freedom?

ELIDURUS.

Yes, when ſuch its guilty price,
Brother, I ſpurn it.

VELLINUS.

Go then, fooliſh boy!
I'll do the deed myſelf.

ELIDURUS.

It ſhall not be:
I will proclaim the fraud.

VELLINUS.

Wilt thou!, 'tis well.
Hie to yon cave; call loudly on the Druid;
And bid him drag to ignominious death
The partner of thy blood. Yet hope not thou
To 'ſcape; for thou didſt join my impious ſteps:
Therefore his wrath ſhall curſe thee: thou ſhalt live;
Yet ſhalt thou live an interdicted wretch,
All rights of nature cancell'd.

ELIDURUS.

O Vellinus!
Rend not my ſoul: by heav'n thou know'ſt I love thee,
As fervently as brother e'er lov'd brother:
And, loving thee, I thought I lov'd mine honour.
Ah! do not wake, dear youth, in this true breaſt
So fierce a conflict.

VELLINUS.

Honour's voice commands
Thou ſhould'ſt obey thy mother, and thy queen.
Honour and Holineſs alike conſpire
To bid thee ſave theſe conſecrated groves
From Roman devaſtation.

ELIDURUS.

Horrid thought!

Hence

Hence let us haſte, ev'n to the furtheſt nook
Of this wide iſle; nor view the ſacrilege.

VELLINUS.

No, let us ſtay, and by our proſperous art
Prevent the ſacrilege. Mark me, my brother,
More years and more experience have matur'd
My ſober thought; I will convince thy youth,
That this our deed has ev'ry honeſt ſanction
Cool reaſon may demand.

ELIDURUS.

To Rome with reaſon:
Try if 'twill bring her deluging ambition
Into the level courſe of right and juſtice:
Try if 'twill tame theſe inſolent invaders;
Who thus, in ſavageneſs of conqueſt, claim
Whom chance of war has ſpar'd. Do this, and proſper.
But, pray thee, do not reaſon from my ſoul
It's inbred honeſty: that holy flame,
Howe'er eclips'd by Rome's black influence
In vulgar minds, ought ſtill to brighten ours.

VELLINUS.

Vain talker, leave me.

ELIDURUS.

No, I will not leave thee:
I muſt not, dare not, in theſe perilous ſhades
Think, if thy fraud ſhould fail, theſe holy men,
How will their juſtice rend thy trait'rous limbs?
If thou ſucceed'ſt, the fiercer pangs of conſcience,
How will they ever goad thy guilty ſoul?
Mercy, defend us! ſee, the awful Druids

Are issuing from their caves: hear'st thou yon signal?
Lo, on the instant all the mountain whitens
With slow descending Bards. Retire, retire;
This is the hour of sacrifice: to stay
Is death.

VELLINUS.

I'll wait the closing of their rites
In yonder vale: do thou, as likes thee best,
Betray, or aid me.

ELIDURUS.

To betray thee, youth,
That love forbids; honour, alas! to aid thee.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter CHORUS.

SEMICHORUS.

Sleep and silence reign around;
Not a night-breeze wakes to blow;
Circle, sons, this holy ground;
Circle close, in triple row.
And if mantl'd in vapours drear,
Any earth-born Spirit dare
To hover round this sacred space,
Haste with light spells the murky foe to chace.
Lift your boughs of vervain blue,
Dipt in cold September dew;
And dash the moisture chaste, and clear,
O'er the ground, and thro' the air.
Now the place is purg'd and pure.
Brethren! say, for this high hour
Are the milk-white steers prepar'd?
Whose necks the rude yoke never scar'd,

To

To the furrow yet unbroke?
For ſuch muſt bleed beneath yon oak.

SEMICHORUS.

Druid, theſe, in order meet,
Are all prepar'd.

SEMICHORUS.

But tell me yet,
Cadwall! did thy ſtep profound
Dive into the cavern deep,
Twice twelve fathom under ground,
Where our ſage fore-fathers ſleep?
Thence with reverence haſt thou born,
From the conſecrated cheſt,
The golden ſickle, ſcrip, and veſt,
Whilom by old *Belinus* worn?

SEMICHORUS.

Druid, theſe, in order meet,
Are all prepar'd.

SEMICHORUS.

But tell me yet,
From the grot of charms and ſpells,
Where our matron ſiſter dwells,
Brennus! has thy holy hand
Safely brought the druid wand;
And the potent adder-ſtone,
Gender'd 'fore th' autumnal moon?
When, in undulating twine,
The foaming ſnakes prolific join;
When they hiſs, and when they bear
Their wond'rous egg aloof in air;
Thence, before to earth it fall,
The Druid, in his hallow'd pall,

Receives the prize;
And inſtant flies,
Follow'd by th'envenom'd brood,
'Till he croſs the cryſtal flood.

SEMICHORUS.

Druid, theſe, in order meet,
Are all prepar'd.

SEMICHORUS.

Then all's compleat.
And now let nine of this ſelected band,
Whoſe greener years befit ſuch ſtation beſt,
With wary circuit pace around the grove:
And guard each inlet; watchful, leſt the eye
Of buſy curioſity profane
Pry on our rites: which now muſt be as cloſe
As done i'th'very central womb of earth.
Occaſion claims it; for *Caractacus*
This night demands admiſſion to our train.
He, once our king, while ought his power avail'd
To ſave his country from the rod of tyrants,
That duty paſt, does wiſely now retire
To end his days in ſecrecy and peace;
Druid with Druids, in this chief of groves,
Ev'n in the heart of Mona. See, he comes!
How awful is his port! mark him, my friends!
He looks, as doth the tower, whoſe nodding walls,
After the conflict of heav'n's angry bolts,
Frown with a dignity unmark'd before,
Ev'n in its prime of ſtrength. Health to the king!

CARAC-

CARACTACUS, EVELINA, CHORUS.

CARACTACUS.

This holy place, methinks, doth this night wear
More than its wonted gloom: Druid, these groves
Have caught the dismal colouring of my soul,
Changing their dark dun garbs to very sable,
In pity to their guest. Hail, hallow'd oaks!
Hail, British born! who, last of British race,
Hold your primæval rights by nature's charter;
Not at the nod of *Cæsar*. Happy foresters,
Ye wave your bold heads in the liberal air;
Nor ask, for privilege, a prætor's edict.
Ye, with your tough and intertwisted roots,
Grasp the firm rocks ye sprung from; and erect
In knotty hardihood, still proudly spread
Your leafy banners 'gainst the tyrannous north,
Who Roman like assails you. Tell me, Druid,
Is it not better to be such as these,
Than be the thing I am?

CHORUS.

To be the thing
Eternal wisdom wills, is ever best.

CARACTACUS.

But I am lost to that predestin'd use
Eternal wisdom will'd, and fitly therefore
May wish a change of being. I was born
A King; and Heav'n, who bade these warrior oaks
Lift their green shields against the fiery sun,
To fence their subject plain, did mean, that I
Should, with as firm an arm, protect my people
Against the pestilent glare of Rome's ambition.

I fail'd;

I fail'd; and how I fail'd, thou know'ſt too well;
So does the babbling world: and therefore, Druid,
I would be any thing ſave what I am.

CHORUS.

See, to thy wiſh, the holy rites prepar'd,
Which, if heav'n frown not, conſecrate thee Druid:
See to the altar's baſe the victims led,
From whoſe free-guſhing blood ourſelf ſhall read
Its high beheſts; which if aſſenting found,
Theſe hands around thy choſen limbs ſhall wrap
The veſt of ſanctity; while at the act
Yon white-rob'd bards, ſweeping their ſolemn harps,
Shall lift their choral warblings to the ſkies,
And call the gods to witneſs. Mean while, Prince,
Bethink thee well, if ought on this vain earth
Still holds too firm an union with thy ſoul,
Eſtranging it from peace.

CARACTACUS.

I had a queen:
Bear with my weakneſs, Druid! this tough breaſt
Muſt heave a ſigh, for ſhe is unreveng'd.
And can I taſte true peace, ſhe unreveng'd?
So chaſte, ſo lov'd a queen? ah, *Evelina!*
Hang not thus weeping on the feeble arm
That could not ſave thy mother.

EVELINA.

To hang thus
Softens the pang of grief; and the ſweet thought,
That a fond father ſtill ſupports his child,
Sheds, on my penſive mind, ſuch ſoothing balm,
As doth the bleſſing of theſe pious ſeers,

When

When moſt they wiſh our welfare. Would to heav'n
A daughter's preſence could as much avail,
To eaſe her father's woes, as his doth mine.

CARACTACUS.

Ever moſt gentle! come unto my boſom:
Dear pattern of the precious prize I loſt,
Loſt, ſo inglorious loſt; my friends, theſe eyes
Did ſee her torn from my defenceleſs camp;
Whilſt I, hemm'd round by ſquadrons, could not
ſave her:
My boy, ſtill nearer to the darling pledge,
Beheld her ſhrieking in the ruffian's arm;
Beheld, and fled.

EVELINA.

Ah! Sir, forbear to wound
My brother's fame; he fled, but to recall
His ſcatter'd forces to purſue and ſave her.

CARACTACUS.

Daughter, he fled. Now, by yon gracious moon,
That riſing ſaw the deed, and inſtant hid
Her bluſhing face in twilight's duſky veil,
The flight was parricide.

EVELINA.

Indeed, indeed,
I know him valiant; and no doubt he fell
'Mid ſlaughter'd thouſands of the haughty foe,
Victim to filial love. *Arviragus*,
Thou hadſt no ſiſter near the bloody field,
Whoſe ſorrowing ſearch, led by yon orb of night,
Might find thy body; waſh with tears thy wounds;
And wipe them with her hair.

CHORUS.

Peace, virgin, peace:
Nor thou, ſad prince, reply; whate'er he is,
Be he a captive, fugitive, or corſe,
He is what heav'n ordain'd: theſe holy groves
Permit no exclamation 'gainſt heav'n's will
To violate their echoes: Patience, here,
Her meek hands folded on her modeſt breaſt,
In mute ſubmiſſion lifts th' adoring eye,
Ev'n to the ſtorm that wrecks her.

EVELINA.

Holy Druid,
If ought my erring tongue has ſaid pollutes
This ſacred place, I from my ſoul abjure it.
And will theſe lips bar with eternal ſilence,
Rather than ſpeak a word, or act a deed
Unmeet for thy ſage daughters; bleſſing firſt
This hallow'd hour that takes me from the world,
And joins me to their ſober ſiſterhood.

CHORUS.

'Tis wiſely ſaid. See, Prince, this prudent maid,
Now, while the ruddy flame of ſparkling youth
Glows on her beauteous cheek, can quit the world
Without a ſigh, whilſt thou—

CARACTACUS.

Would ſave my queen
From a baſe raviſher; would wiſh to plunge
This falchion in his breaſt, and ſo avenge
Inſulted royalty. O holy men!
Ye are the ſons of piety and peace;
Ye never felt the ſharp vindictive ſpur,

That

That goads the injur'd warrior; the hot tide,
That fluſhes crimſon on the conſcious cheek
Of him, who burns for glory; elſe indeed
Ye much would pity me: would curſe the fate
That coops me here inactive in your groves,
Robs me of hope, tells me this truſty ſteel
Muſt never cleave one Roman helm again;
Never avenge my queen, nor free my country.

CHORUS.

'Tis heav'n's high will——

CARACTACUS.

I know it, reverend fathers!
'Tis heav'n's high will, that theſe poor aged eyes
Shall never more behold that virtuous woman,
To whom my youth was conſtant, 'twas heaven's will
To take her from me at that very hour,
When beſt her love might ſooth me; that black hour,
[May memory ever raze it from her records]
When all my ſquadrons fled, and left their king
Old and defenceleſs: him, who nine whole years
Had taught them how to conquer: Yes, my friends,
For nine whole years againſt the ſons of rapine
I led my veterans, oft to victory,
Never 'till then to ſhame. Bear with me, Druid,
I've done: begin the rites.

CHORUS.

O would to heav'n
A frame of mind, more fitted to theſe rites,
Poſſeſt thee, Prince! that Reſignation meek,
That dove-ey'd Peace, handmaid of Sanctity,
Approach'd this altar with thee: 'ſtead of theſe,

See I not gaunt Revenge, enſanguin'd Slaughter,
And mad Ambition, clinging to thy ſoul,
Eager to ſnatch thee back to their domain,
Back to a vain and miſerable world;
Whoſe mis'ry and vanity, tho' try'd,
Thou ſtill hold'ſt dearer than theſe ſolemn ſhades,
Where Quiet reigns with Virtue? Try we yet
What Holineſs can do! for much it can:
Much is the potency of pious prayer:
And much the ſacred influence convey'd
By ſage myſterious office: when the ſoul,
Snatch'd by the power of muſic from her cell
Of fleſhly thraldom, feels herſelf upborn
On plumes of extacy, and boldly ſprings,
'Mid ſwelling harmonies and pealing hymns,
Up to the porch of heav'n. Strike, then, ye Bards!
Strike all your ſtrings ſymphonious; wake a ſtrain
May penetrate, may purge, may purify,
His yet unhallow'd boſom; call ye hither
The airy tribe, that on yon mountain dwell,
Ev'n on majeſtic Snowdon: they, who never
Deign viſit mortal men, ſave on ſome cauſe
Of higheſt import, but, ſublimely ſhrin'd
On its hoar top in domes of cryſtalline ice,
Hold converſe with thoſe ſpirits, that poſſeſs
The ſkies pure ſapphire, neareſt heav'n itſelf.

O D E.

Mona on Snowdon calls:
Hear, thou King of mountains, hear;
Hark, ſhe ſpeaks from all her ſtrings;
Hark, her loudeſt echo rings;
King of Mountains, bend thine ear:

Send thy ſpirits, ſend them ſoon,
Now, when Midnight and the Moon
Meet upon thy front of ſnow:
See, their gold and ebon rod,
Where the ſober ſiſters nod,
And greet in whiſpers ſage and ſlow.
Snowdon mark! 'tis Magic's hour;
Now the mutter'd ſpell hath pow'r;
Pow'r to rend thy ribs of rock,
And burſt thy baſe with thunder's ſhock;
But to thee no ruder ſpell
Shall Mona uſe, than thoſe that dwell
In muſic's ſecret cells, and lie
Steep'd in the ſtream of harmony.
Snowdon has heard the ſtrain:
Hark, amid the wond'ring grove
Other harpings anſwer clear,
Other voices meet our ear,
Pinions flutter, ſhadows move,
Buſy murmurs hum around,
Ruſtling veſtments bruſh the ground;
Round, and round, and round they go,
Thro' the twilight, thro' the ſhade,
Mount the oak's majeſtic head,
And gild the tufted miſſeltoe.
Ceaſe, ye glittering race of light,
Cloſe your wings, and check your flight.
Here arrang'd in order due,
Spread your robes of ſaffron hue;
For lo, with more than mortal fire,
Mighty *Mador* ſmites the lyre:
Hark he ſweeps the maſter-ſtrings;
Liſten all——

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Break off; a ſullen ſmoak involves the altar;
The central oak doth ſhake; I hear the ſound
Of ſteps profane: *Caractacus*, retire;
Bear hence the victims; Mona is polluted.

SEMICHORUS.

Father, as we did watch the eaſtern ſide,
We ſpied and inſtant ſeiz'd two ſtranger youths,
Who, in the bottom of a ſhadowy dell,
Held earneſt converſe: Britons do they ſeem,
And of Brigantian race.

CHORUS.

Haſte, drag them hither.

VELLINUS, ELIDURUS, CHORUS.

ELIDURUS.

O ſpare, ye ſage and venerable Druids!
Your countrymen and ſons.

CHORUS.

And are ye Britons?
Unheard of profanation: Rome herſelf,
Ev'n impious Rome, whom conqueſt makes more impious,
Would not have dar'd ſo raſhly. O! for words,
Big with the fierceſt force of execration,
To blaſt the deed, and doers.

ELIDURUS.

Spare the curſe,
Oh ſpare our youth!

 CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Is it not now the hour,
The holy hour, when to the cloudleſs height
Of yon ſtarr'd concave climbs the full orb'd moon,
And to this nether world in ſolemn ſtillneſs
Gives ſign, that to the liſt'ning ear of Heav'n
Religion's voice ſhould plead? The very babe
Knows this, and, chance awak'd, his little hands
Lifts to the gods, and on his innocent couch
Calls down a bleſſing. Shall your manly years
Plead ignorance and impiouſly preſume
To tread, with vile unconſecrated feet,
On Mona's hallow'd plain? know, wretches, know,
At any hour ſuch boldneſs is a crime,
At this 'tis ſacrilege

VELLINUS.

Were Mona's plain
More hallow'd ſtill, hallow'd as is Heav'n's ſelf,
The cauſe might plead our pardon.

ELIDURUS.

Mighty Druid!
True we have raſhly dar'd, yet forc'd by duty,
Our ſov'reign's mandate———

VELLINUS.

Elder by my birth,
Brother, I claim, in right of eldership,
To open our high embaſſy.

CHORUS.

Speak then;
But ſee thy words anſwer in honeſt weight

To this proud prelude. Youth! they muſt be weighty,
T'atone for ſuch a crime.

VELLINUS.

If then to give
New nerves to vanquiſh'd valor; if to do,
What, with the bleſſing of the Gods, may ſave
A bleeding country from oppreſſion's ſword,
Be weighty buſineſs, known, on our commiſſion,
And on its hop'd ſucceſs, that weight depends.

CHORUS.

Declare it then at once, briefly and boldly.

VELLINUS.

Caractacus is here.

CHORUS.

Say'ſt thou, proud boy?
'Tis boldly ſaid, and, grant 'twere truly ſaid,
Think'ſt thou he were not here from fraud or force
As ſafe, as in a camp of conquerors?
Here, youth, he would be guarded by the Gods;
Their own high hoſtage; and each ſacred hair
Of his ſelected head, would in theſe caverns
Sleep with the unſunn'd ſilver of the mine,
As precious and as ſafe; record the time,
When Mona e'er betray'd the hapleſs wretch,
That made her groves his refuge.

VELLINUS.

Holy Druid!
Think not ſo harſhly of our enterprize.
Can force, alas! dwell in our unarm'd hands?
Can fraud in our young boſoms? No, dread ſeer,
Our

Our buſineſs told, I truſt thou'lt ſoon diſclaim
The vain ſuſpicion; and thy holy ear
(Be brave *Caractacus* or here or abſent)
Shall inſtant learn it. From the north we come;
The ſons of her, whoſe heav'n-entruſted ſway
Bleſſes the bold Brigantes; men who firmly
Have three long moons withſtood thoſe Roman powers,
Which, led by fell *Oſtorius*, ſtill aſſail
Our frontiers: yet ſo oft have our ſtout ſwords
Repell'd their hot aſſault, that now, like falcons,
They hang ſuſpended, loth to quit their prey,
Nor daring yet to ſeize it. Such the ſtate
Of us and Rome; in which our prudent mother,
Revolving what might beſt ſecure her country
From this impending ruin, gave us charge
To ſeek the great *Caractacus*, and call
His valour to her aid, to lead her bands,
To fight the cauſe of liberty and Britain,
And quell theſe ravagers.

[Caractacus ſtarts from behind the altar.

CARACTACUS, VELLINUS, ELIDURUS, CHORUS.

CARACTACUS.

And ye have found me;
Friends, ye have found me: lead me to your Queen,
And the laſt purple drop in theſe old veins
Shall fall for her and Britain.

CHORUS.

Raſh, raſh Prince!

VELLINUS.

VELLINUS.

Ye bleſt immortal powers! is this the man,
The more than man, who for nine bloody years
Withſtood all Rome? He is; that warlike front,
Seam'd o'er with honeſt ſcars proclaims he is:
Kneel, brother, kneel, while in his royal hand
We lodge the ſignet: this, in pledge of faith,
Great *Cartiſmandua* ſends, and with it tells thee
She has a nobler pledge than this behind,
Thy Queen———

CARACTACUS.

Guideria!

VELLINUS.

Safely with our Mother.

CARACTACUS.

How, when, where reſcu'd? mighty Gods, I thank ye,
For it is true, this ſignet ſpeaks it true.
O tell me briefly.

VELLINUS.

In a ſally, Prince,
Which wanting abler chiefs, my gracious mother
Committed to my charge, our troops aſſail'd
One outwork of the camp; the maſk of night
Favour'd our arms, and there my happy hand
Was doom'd with other priſoners to releaſe
The captive matron.

CARACTACUS.

Let me claſp thee, youth,
And thou ſhalt be my ſon: I had one, ſtranger,

 Juſt

Just of thy years; he look'd like thee right honest;
Had just that freeborn boldness on his brow,
And yet he fail'd me. Were it not for him,
Who, as thou seest, ev'n at this hour of joy,
Draws tears down mine old cheek, I were as blest
As the great gods. Oh, he has all disgrac'd
His high-born ancestry! But I'll forget him.
Haste, *Evelina*, barb my knotty spear,
Bind fast this trusty falchion to my thigh,
My bow, my target——

CHORUS.

Rash Caractacus!
What hast thou done? What dost thou mean to do?

CARACTACUS.

To save my country.

CHORUS.

To betray thyself.
That thou hast done; the rest thou canst not do,
If Heav'n forbids; and of its awful will
Thy fury recks not: Has the bleeding victim
Pour'd a propitious stream? the milk-white steeds
Unrein'd and neighing pranc'd with fav'ring steps?
Say, when these youths approach'd, did not a gust
Of livid smoak involve the bickering flame?
Did not the forest tremble? every omen
Led thee to doubt their honesty of purpose;
And yet, before their tongues could tell that purpose,
Ere I had tender'd, as our laws ordain,
Their test of faith, thy rudeness rush'd before me,
Infringing my just rights.

CARAC

CARACTACUS.

Druid, methinks,
At ſuch a time, in ſuch a cauſe, Reproof
Might bate its ſternneſs. Now, by Heav'n, I feel,
Beyond all omens, that within my breaſt,
Which marſhals me to conqueſt; ſomething here
That ſnatches me beyond all mortal fears,
Lifts me to where upon her jaſper throne
Sits flame-rob'd Victory, who calls me ſon,
And crowns me with a palm, whoſe deathleſs green
Shall bloom when Cæſar's fades.

CHORUS.

Vain confidence!

CARACTACUS.

Yet I ſubmit in all——

CHORUS.

'Tis meet thou ſhould'ſt.
Thou art a King, a ſov'reign o'er frail man;
I am a Druid, ſervant of the Gods;
Such ſervice is above ſuch ſov'reignty,
As well thou know'ſt: if they ſhould prompt theſe lips
To interdict the thing thou dar'ſt to do,
What would avail thy daring?

CARACTACUS.

Holy man!
But thou wilt bleſs it; Heav'n will bid thee bleſs it;
Thou know'ſt that, when we fight to ſave our country,
We fight the cauſe of Heav'n. The man that falls,
Falls hallow'd; falls a victim for the Gods;
For them and for their altars.

CHORUS.

Valiant Prince!
Think not we lightly rate our country's weal,
Or, thee, our country's champion. Well we know
The glorious meed of thoſe exalted ſouls,
Who flame like thee for freedom: mark me, Prince,
The time will come, when Deſtiny and Death,
Thron'd in a burning car, the thund'ring wheels
Arm'd with gigantic ſcythes of adamant,
Shall ſcour this field of life: and in the rear
The fiend Oblivion: kingdoms, empires, worlds
Melt in the general blaze: when, lo, from high
Andraſte darting, catches from the wreck
The roll of fame, claps her aſcending plumes,
And ſtamps on orient ſtars each patriot name,
Round her eternal dome.

CARACTACUS.

Speak ever thus,
And I will hear thee, 'till attention faint
In heedleſs [illegible]

CHORUS.

This tho' we know,
Let man beware with headlong zeal to ruſh
Where ſlaughter calls; it is not courage, Prince,
No nor the pride and practis'd ſkill in arms,
That gains this meed: the warrior is no patriot,
Save when, obſequious to the will of Heav'n,
He draws the ſword of vengeance.

CARACTACUS.

Surely, Druid,
Such fair occaſion ſpeaks the will of Heav'n.—

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Monarch, perchance thou haſt a fair occaſion:
But, if thou haſt, the Gods will ſoon declare it:
Their ſov'reign will thou know'ſt not; this to learn
Demands our ſearch. Ye mortals all retire!
Leave ye the grove to us and inſpiration;
Nor let a ſtep, or ev'n one glance profane,
Steal from your caverns: ſtay, my holy breth[illegible]
Ye time-ennobled Seers, whoſe rev'[illegible] brows
Full eighty winters whiten; you, ye Bards,
Leoline, Cadwall, Hoel, Cant[illegible]ber,
Attend upon [illegible] numbers: Wond'rous men,
Ye, whoſe ſkill'd fingers know how beſt to lead,
Thro' all the maze of ſound, the wayward ſtep
Of Harmony, recalling oft, and oft
Permitting her unbridled courſe to ruſh
Thro' diſſonance to concord, ſweeteſt then
Ev'n when expected harſheſt. *Mador* thou
Alone ſhalt lift thy voice; no choral peal
Shall drown thy ſolemn warbling[illegible] beſt know'ſt
That opiate charm which lulls co[illegible] ſenſe:
Thou haſt the key, great Bard, that beſt can ope
The portal of the ſoul; unlock it ſtraight,
And lead the penſive pilgrim on her way,
Through the vaſt regions of futurity.

Exeunt Caractacus, Vellinus, &c.

CHORUS.

ODE.

Hail, thou harp of Phrygian frame!
  In years of yore that Camber bore
From Troy's ſepulchral flame;
  Wi[illegible] to Britain's ſhore
The mighty minſtrel came:

Sublime

Sublime upon thy burnish'd prow,
He bade thy manly modes to flow;
Britain heard the descant bold,
She flung her white arms o'er the sea;
Proud in her leafy bosom to enfold
The freight of harmony.

Mute 'till then was ev'ry plain,
[illegible]e where the flood o'er mountains rude
Tumbled his [illegible] amain:
And Echo from [illegible]h' impending wood
Resounded the hoar[illegible] str[illegible]n:
While from the north the sullen gale
With hollow whistlings shook the vale;
Dismal notes, and answer'd soon
By savage howl the heaths among,
What time the wolf doth bay the trembling moon,
And thin the bleating throeg.

Thou spak'st, imperial Lyre,
The rough [illegible]as'd, and airs from high
Lapt the l[illegible]tasy:
Fancy, the fairy with thee came;
And Inspiration, bright-ey'd dame,
Oft at thy call would leave her sapphire sky;
And, if not vain the verse presumes,
Ev'n now some chaste Divinity is near!
For lo! the sound of distant plumes
Pants thro' the pathless desart of the air.
'Tis not the flight of her;
'Tis sleep, her dewy harbinger,
Change my harp, O change thy measures;
Cull, from thy mellifluous treasures,

Notes

Notes that ſteal on even feet,
Ever flow, yet never pauſing,
Mixt with many a warble ſweet,
In a ling'ring cadence cloſing,
While the pleas'd power ſinks gently down the ſkies,
And ſeals with hand of down the Druids ſlumb'ring
eyes.

Thrice I pauſe, and thrice I ſound
The central ſtring, and now I ring
(By meaſur'd lore profound)
A ſevenfold chime, and ſweep, and ſwing
Above, below, around,
To mix thy muſic with the ſpheres,
That warble to immortal ears.
Inſpiration hears the call;
She riſes from her throne above,
And, ſudden as the glancing meteors fall,
She comes, ſhe fills the grove.

High her port; her waving hand
A pencil bears; the days, the [illegible]
Ariſe at her command,
And each obedient colouring wears.
Lo, where Time's pictur'd band
In hues æthereal glide along;
O mark the tranſitory throng;
Now they dazzle, now they die,
Inſtant they flit from light to ſhade,
Mark the blue forms of faint futurity;
O mark them ere they fade.

Whence

Whence was that inward groan?
Why burſts thro' cloſed lids the tear?
Why uplifts the briſtling hair
Its white and venerable ſhade?
Why down the conſecrated head
Courſes in chilly drops the dew of fear?
All is not well, the pale-ey'd moon
Curtains her head in clouds, the ſtars retire,
Save from the ſultry ſouth alone
The ſwart ſtar flings his peſtilential fire;
Ev'n ſleep herſelf will fly,
If not recall'd by harmony.
Wake, my lyre! thy ſofteſt numbers,
Such as nurſe extatic ſlumbers,
Sweet as tranquil virtue feels
When the toil of life is ending,
While from the earth the ſpirit ſteals,
And, on new-born plumes aſcending,
Haſtens to lave in the bright fount of day,
'Till Deſtiny prepare a ſhrine of purer clay.

[The Druid waking, ſpeaks.

CHORUS.

It may not be. Avaunt, terrific ax;
Why hangs thy bright edge glaring o'er the grove?
O for a giant's nerve to ward the ſtroke!
It bows, it falls.
Where am I? huſh, my ſoul!
'Twas all a dream. Reſume no more the ſtrain:
The hour is paſt: my brethren! what ye ſaw,
(If what ye ſaw, as by your looks, I read,
Bore like ill-omen'd ſhape) hold it in ſilence.
The midnight air falls chilly on my breaſt:

And

And now I ſhiver, now a fev'riſh glow
Scorches my vitals. Hark, ſome ſtep approaches.

EVELINA, CHORUS.

EVELINA.

Thus, with my wayward fears, to burſt unbidden
On your dread ſynod, rouſing as ye ſeem,
From holy trance, appears a deſperate deed,
Ev'n to the wretch who dares it.

CHORUS.

Virgin! quickly
Pronounce the cauſe.

EVELINA.

Bear with a ſimple maid
Too prone to fear, perchance my fears are vain.

CHORUS.

But yet declare them.

EVELINA.

I ſuſpect me m[illegible]
The faith of theſe Brigantes.

CHORUS.

Say'ſt thou, Virgin?
Heed what thou ſay'ſt; Suſpicion is a gueſt
That in the breaſt of man, of wrathful man,
Too oft' his welcome finds; yet ſeldom ſure
In that ſubmiſſive calm that ſmooths the mind
Of maiden innocence.

EVELINA.

I know it well:
Yet m[illegible] ſtill diſtruſt the elder ſtranger:

For

For while he talks, (and much the flatterer talks)
His brother's ſilent carriage gives diſproof
Of all his boaſt; indeed I mark'd it well;
And, as my father with the elder held
Bold ſpeech and warlike, as is ſtill his wont
When fir'd with hope of conqueſt, oft I ſaw
A ſigh unbidden heave the younger's breaſt,
Half check'd as it was rais'd; ſometimes, methought,
His gentle eye would caſt a glance on me,
As if he pitied me; and then again
Would faſten on my father, gazing there
To veneration; then [illegible] again
Look on the ground, and hang his modeſt head
Moſt penſively.

CHORUS.

This may demand, my brethren,
More ſerious ſearch: Virgin! proceed.

EVELINA.

'Tis true,
My father, [illegible] high heroic zeal,
His ev'ry thought big with his country's freedom,
Heeds not the different carriage of theſe brethren:
The elder takes him wholly; yet, methinks,
The younger's manners have I know not what,
That ſpeaks him far more artleſs. This beſides,
Is it not ſtrange, if, as the tale reports,
My mother ſojourns with this diſtant Queen,
She ſhould not ſend or to my ſire, or me,
Some fond remembrance of her love? ah! none,
With tears I ſpeak it, none, not her dear bleſſing
Has reach'd my longing ears.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

The Gods, my brethren,
Have wak'd theſe doubts in the untainted breaſt
Of this mild maiden; oft to female ſoftneſs,
Oft to the purity of virgin ſouls
Doth heav'n its voluntary light diſpenſe,
When victims bleed in vain. They muſt be ſpies.
Hie thee, good *Cantaber*, and to our preſence
Summon the young Brigantian.

EVELINA.

Do not that,
Or, if ye do, yet treat him nothing ſternly:
The ſofteſt terms from ſuch a tender breaſt
Will draw confeſſion, and, if ye ſhall find
The treaſon ye ſuſpect, forbear to curſe him.
(Not that my weakneſs means to guide your wiſdom)
Yet, as I think he would not wittingly
E'er do a deed of baſeneſs, were it granted
That I might queſtion him, my heart forebodes
It more could gain by gentleneſs [illegible]ayers,
Than will the fierceſt threats.

CHORUS.

Perchance it may:
And quickly ſhalt thou try. But ſee the King!
And with him both the youths.

EVELINA.

Alas! my fears
Forewent my errand, elſe had I inform'd thee
That therefore did I come, and from my father
To gain admiſſion. Mark the younger, Druid,

How ſad he ſeems; oft did he in the cave
So fold his arms———

CHORUS.

We mark him much, and much
The elder's free and dreadleſs confidence.
Virgin, retire awhile in yonder vale,
Nor, 'till thy royal father quits the grove,
Reſume thy ſtation here. [*Exit Evelina.*

CARACTACUS, CHORUS, VELLINUS, ELIDURUS.

CARACTACUS.

Forgive me, Druid!
My eager ſoul no longer could ſuſtain
The pangs of expectation; hence I ſent
The virgin innocence of *Evelina*,
Safeſt to break upon your privacy:
She not return'd, O pardon! that uncall'd
I follow: the great cauſe, I truſt, abſolves me:
'Tis your's, 'tis wiſdom's, 'tis the cauſe of heav'n;
And ſure heav'n owns it ſuch.

CHORUS.

Caractacus,
All that by ſage and ſanctimonious rites
Might of the gods be aſk'd, we have eſſay'd,
And yet, nor to our wiſh, nor to their won[t],
Gave they benign aſſent.

CARACTACUS.

Death to our hopes!

CHORUS.

While yet we lay in ſacred ſlumbers tranc'd,

Sullen

Sullen and ſad to fancy's frighted eye
Did ſhapes of dun and murky hue advance,
In train tumultuous, all of geſture ſtrange,
And paſſing horrible; ſtarting we wak'd,
Yet felt no waking calm; ſtill all was dark,
Still rang our tinkling ears with ſcreams of woe.
Suſpicious tremors ſtill——

VELLINUS.

Of what ſuſpicious?
Druid, our Queen——

CHORUS.

Reſtrain thy wayward tongue,
Inſolent youth! in ſuch licentious mood
To interrupt our ſpeech ill ſuits thy years,
And worſe our ſanctity.

CARACTACUS.

'Tis his diſtreſs
Makes him forget, what elſe his reverent zeal
Would pay ye holily. Think what he feels,
Poor youth! who fears yon moon, ..., ſhe wanes,
May ſee his country conquer'd; ſee his mother
The victor's ſlave, her royal blood debas'd,
Dragging her chains thro' the throng'd ſtreets of Rome.
To grace oppreſſion's triumph. Horrid thought!
Say, can it be that he, whoſe ſtrenuous youth
Adds vigour to his virtue, e'er can bear
This patiently? he comes to aſk my aid,
And, that withheld, (as now he needs muſt fear)
What means, alas! are left? ſearch Britain round,
What chief dares cope with Rome? what king but holds

His

His loan of power at a Proconſul's will,
At beſt a ſcepter'd ſlave?

VELLINUS.

Yes, Monarch, yes,
If Heav'n reſtrains thy formidable ſword,
Or to its ſtroke denies that juſt ſucceſs
Which Heav'n alone can give, I fear me much
Our Queen, ourſelves, nay Britain's ſelf, muſt periſh.

CARACTACUS.

But is not this a fear makes Virtue vain?
Tears from yon miniſtring regents of the ſky
Their right? Plucks from firm-handed Providence,
The golden reins of ſublunary ſway,
And gives them to blind Chance? If this be ſo,
If Tyranny muſt lord it o'er the earth,
There's Anarchy in Heav'n. Nay, frown not, Druid,
I do not think 'tis thus.

CHORUS.

We truſt thou do'ſt not,

CARACTACUS.

Maſters of Wiſdom! No: my ſoul confides
In that all-healing and all-forming Power,
Who, on the radiant day when Time was born,
Caſt his broad eye upon the wild of ocean.
And calm'd it with a glance: then, plunging deep
His mighty arm, pluck'd from its dark domain
This throne of Freedom, lifted it to light,
Girt it with ſilver cliffs, and call'd it Britain:
He did, and will preſerve it.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Pious Prince,
In that all-healing and all-forming power
Still let thy ſoul confide; but not in men,
No, not in theſe, ingenuous as they ſeem,
'Till they are tried by that high teſt of faith
Our ancient laws ordain.

VELLINUS.

Illuſtrious Seer,
Methinks our Sov'reign's ſignet well might plead
Her envoy's faith. Thy pardon, mighty Druid,
Not for ourſelves, but for our Queen we plead;
Miſtruſting us, ye wound her honour.

CHORUS.

Peace;
Our will admits no parly. Thither, Youths,
Turn your aſtoniſh'd eyes; behold yon huge
And unhewn ſphere of living adamant,
Which, pois'd by magic, reſts its central weight
On yonder pointed rock: firm as it ſeems,
Such is its ſtrange and virtuous property,
It moves obſequious to the gentleſt touch
Of him, whoſe breaſt is pure; but to a traitor,
Tho' ev'n a giant's proweſs nerv'd his arm,
It ſtands as fixt as Snowdon. No reply.
The Gods command that one of you muſt now
Approach and try it: in your ſnowy veſts,
Ye Prieſts, involve the lots, and to the younger,
As in our wont, tender the choice of Fate.

ELIDURUS.

Heav'ns! is it fall'n on me?

CHORUS.

Young Prince, it is;
Prepare thee for thy trial.

ELIDURUS.

Gracious Gods!
Who may look up to your tremendous thrones,
And ſay his breaſt is pure? All-ſearching Powers,
Ye know already how and what I am;
And what ye mean to publiſh me in Mona,
To that I yield and tremble.

CARACTACUS.

Rouſe thee, Youth!
And, with that courage honeſt Truth ſupplies,
(For ſure ye both are true) haſte to the trial;
Behold I lead thee on.

CHORUS.

Prince, we arreſt
Thy haſty ſtep; to witneſs this high teſt
Pertains to us alone. A while retire,
And in yon cave his brother be thy charge;
The trial paſt, again we will confer,
Touching that part which Heav'n's deciding choice
Wills thee to act.

[*Exeunt Caractacus and Vellinus.*

CHORUS, ELIDURUS.

CHORUS.

Now be the rites prepar'd.
And now, ye Bards, chaunt ye that cuſtom'd hymn,
The prelude of this fam'd ſolemnity.

ODE:

ODE.

Thou Spirit pure, that ſpread'ſt unſeen
Thy pinions o'er this pond'rous ſphere,
And, breathing thro' each rigid vein,
Fill'ſt with ſtupendous life the marble maſs
And bid'ſt it bow upon its baſe,
When ſov'reign Truth is near;
Spirit inviſible! to thee
We ſwell the ſolemn harmony,
Hear us, and aid:
Thou that in Virtue's cauſe
O'er-ruleſt Nature's laws,
O hear, and aid with influence high
The ſons of Peace and Piety.

Firſt-born of that ethereal tribe
Call'd into birth ere time or place,
Whom wave nor wind can circumſcribe,
Heirs of the liquid liberty of light,
That float on rainbow pennons bright
Thro' all the wilds of ſpace,
Yet thou alone of all thy kind
Canſt range the regions of the mind,
Thou only know'ſt
That dark meandring maze,
Where wayward Falſhood ſtrays,
And, ſeizing ſwift the lurking ſprite,
Forces her forth to ſhame and light.

Thou canſt enter the dark cell
Where the vulture Conſcience ſlumbers,
And, unarm'd by charming ſpell,
Or magic numbers,

Canſt

Canſt rouſe her from her formidable ſleep,
And bid her dart her raging talons deep;
Yet, ah! too ſeldom doth the furious fiend
Thy bidding wait; vindictive, ſelf prepar'd,
She knows her torturing time; too ſure to rend
The trembling heart, when Virtue quits her guard.
Pauſe then, celeſtial gueſt!
And, brooding on thine adamantine ſphere,
If fraud approach, Spirit, that fraud declare;
To Conſcience and to Mona leave the reſt.

CHORUS.

Heard'ſt thou the awful invocation, Youth,
Wrapt in thoſe holy harpings?

ELIDURUS.

Sage, I did;
And it came o'er my ſoul as doth the thunder,
While diſtant yet, with an expected burſt,
It threats the trembling ear. Now to the trial.

CHORUS.

Ere that, bethink thee well what rig'rous doom
Attends thine act, if failing certain death:
So certain, that in our abſolving tongues
Reſts not that power may ſave thee: Thou muſt die.

EVELINA, ELIDURUS, CHORUS.

EVELINA.

Die ſay'ſt thou? Druid!

ELIDURUS.

Evelina here!
Lead to the rock.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

No. Youth, awhile we ſpare thee;
And, in our ſtead, permit this royal maiden
To urge thee firſt with virgin gentleneſs;
Reſpect our clemency, and meet our queſtions
With anſwers prompt and true; ſo may'ſt thou 'ſcape
A ſterner trial.

ELIDURUS.

Rather to the rock.——

EVELINA.

Doſt thou diſdain me, Prince? Loſt as I am,
Methinks the daughter of *Caractacus*
Might merit milder treatment: I was born
To royal hopes and promiſes, nurs'd i'th'lap
Of ſoft proſperity; alas the change!
I meant but to addreſs a few brief words
To this young Prince, and he doth turn his eye,
And ſcorn to anſwer me.

ELIDURUS.

Scorn thee, ſweet Maid?
No—'tis the fear——

EVELINA.

And can'ſt thou fear me, Youth?
Ev'n while I led a life of royalty,
I bore myſelf to all with meek deportment,
In nothing harſh, or cruel: and, howe'er
Misfortune works upon the minds of men,
(For ſome they ſay it turns to very ſtone)
Mine I am ſure it ſoftens. Wer't thou guilty,
Yet I ſhould pity thee; nay, wer't thou leagu'd
To load this ſuffering heart with more misfortunes,

Still ſhould I pity thee; nor e'er believe
Thou would'ſt, on free and voluntary choice,
Betray the innocent.

ELIDURUS.

Indeed I would not.

EVELINA.

No, gracious Youth, I do believe thou would'ſt not;
For on thy brow the liberal hand of Heav'n
Has portray'd Truth as viſible and bold,
As were the pictur'd ſuns that deckt the brows
Of our brave anceſtors. Say then, young Prince,
(For therefore have I wiſh'd to queſtion thee)
Bring ye no token of a mother's fondneſs
To her expecting child? Gentle thou ſeem'ſt,
And ſure that gentleneſs would prompt thine heart
To viſit, and to ſooth with courteous office,
Diſtreſs like her's. A captive and a queen
Has more than common claim for pity, Prince,
And ev'n the ills of venerable age
Were cauſe enough to move thy tender nature.
The tears o'ercharge thine eye. Alas, my fears!
Sickneſs or ſore infirmity had ſeiz'd her,
Before thou left'ſt the palace, elſe her lips
Had to thy care entruſted ſome kind meſſage,
And bleſt her hapleſs daughter by thy tongue.
Would ſhe were here!

ELIDURUS.

Would Heav'n ſhe were!

EVELINA.

Ah why?

ELIDURUS.

ELIDURUS.

Becauſe you wiſh it.

EVELINA.

Thanks, ingenuous Youth,
For this thy courteſy. Yet if the Queen
Thy mother ſhines with ſuch rare qualities,
As late thy brother boaſted, ſhe will calm
Her woes, and I ſhall claſp her aged knees
Again, in peace and liberty.——Alas!
He ſpeaks not; all my fears are juſt.

ELIDURUS.

What fears?
The Queen *Guideria* is not dead.

EVELINA.

Not dead!
But is ſhe in that happy ſtate of freedom,
Which we were taught to hope? Why ſigh'ſt thou,
Youth?
Thy years have yet been proſp'rous. Did thy father
E'er loſe a kingdom? Did captivity
E'er ſeize thy ſhrieking mother? thou can'ſt go
To yonder cave, and find thy brother ſafe:
He is not loſt, as mine is. Youth, thou ſigh'ſt
Again; thou haſt not ſure ſuch cauſe for ſorrow;
But if thou haſt, give me thy griefs, I pray thee;
I have a heart can ſoftly ſympathize,
And ſympathy is ſoothing.

ELIDURUS.

O Gods! Gods!
She tears my ſoul. What ſhall I ſay?

EVELINA.

Perchance,
For all in this bad world muſt have their woes,
Thou too haſt thine; and may'ſt, like me, be wretched:
Haply amid the ruinous waſte of war,
'Mid that wild havock, which thoſe ſons of blood
Bring on our groaning country, ſome chaſte maid,
Whoſe tender ſoul was link'd by love to thine,
Might fall the trembling prey to Roman rage,
Ev'n at the golden hour, when holy rites
Had ſeal'd your virtuous vows. If it were ſo,
Indeed I pity her!

ELIDURUS.

Not that: not that.
Never 'till now did beauty's matchleſs beam——
But I am dumb.

EVELINA.

Why that dejected eye?
And why this ſilence? that ſome weighty grief
O'erhangs thy ſoul, thy ev'ry look proclaims.
Why then refuſe it words? The heart that bleeds
From any ſtroke of fate or human wrongs,
Loves to diſcloſe itſelf, that liſt'ning pity
May drop a healing tear upon the wound.
'Tis only, when with inbred horror ſmote
At ſome baſe act, or done, or to be done,
That the recoiling ſoul, with conſcious dread,
Shrinks back into itſelf But thou, good Youth—

ELIDURUS.

Ceaſe, royal maid! permit me to depart.—

EVELINA.

Yet, hear me, ſtranger! Truth and Secreſy,
Tho' friends, are ſeldom neceſſary friends.——

ELIDURUS.

I go to try my truth —

EVELINA.

O! go not hence,
In wrath; think not, that I ſuſpect thy virtue:
Yet ignorance may oft make virtue ſlide,
And if——

ELIDURUS.

In pity ſpare me.

EVELINA.

If thy brother——
Nay, ſtart not, do not turn thine eye from mine;
Speak, I conjure thee, is his purpoſe honeſt?
I know the guilty price, that barbarous Rome
Sets on my father's head; and gold, vile gold,
Has now a charm for Britons: Brib'd by this,
Should he betray him—Yes, I ſee thou ſhudder'ſt
At the dire thought; yet not, as if 'twere ſtrange;
But as our fears were mutual. Ah, young ſtranger;
That open face ſcarce needs a tongue to utter
What works within. Come then, ingenuous Prince,
And inſtant make diſcovery to the Druid,
While yet 'tis not too late.

ELIDURUS.

Ah! what diſcover?
Say, whom muſt I betray?

EVELINA.

Thy brother.

ELIDURUS.

Ha!

EVELINA.

Who is no brother, if his guilty ſoul
Teems with ſuch perfidy. O all ye ſtars!
Can he be brother to a youth like thee,
Who would betray an old and honour'd King,
That King his countryman, and one whoſe prowefs
Once guarded Britain 'gainſt th' aſſailing world?
Can he be brother to a youth like thee,
Who from a young, defenceleſs, innocent maid,
Would take that King her father? Make her ſuffer
All that an orphan ſuffers? More perchance:
The ruffian foe.—O tears, ye choak my utterance!
Can he be brother to a youth like thee,
Who would defile his ſoul by ſuch black deeds?
It cannot be——And yet, thou ſtill art ſilent.
Turn, youth, and ſee me weep. Ah, ſee me kneel:
I am of royal blood, not wont to kneel,
Yet will I kneel to thee. O ſave my father!
Save a diſtreſsful maiden from the force
Of barbarous men! Be thou a brother to me,
For mine alas! hah!

[*Sees Arviragus entering.*

ARVIRAGUS, EVELINA, ELIDURUS, CHORUS.

ARVIRAGUS.

Evelina, riſe!
Know, maid, I ne'er will tamely ſee thee kneel
Ev'n at the foot of *Cæſar*.

EVELINA.

'Tis himſelf:

And he will prove my father's fears were falſe,
Falſe, as his ſon is brave. Thou beſt of brothers.
Come to my arms. Where haſt thou been, thou
wanderer?
How wer't thou ſav'd? Indeed, *Arviragus*,
I never ſhed ſuch tears, ſince thou wer't loſt,
For theſe are tears of rapture.

ARVIRAGUS.

Evelina!
Fain would I greet thee, as a brother ought:
But wherefore did'ſt thou kneel?

EVELINA.

O! aſk not now.

ARVIRAGUS.

By heav'n I muſt, and he muſt anſwer me,
Whoe'er he be. What art thou, ſullen ſtranger?

ELIDURUS.

A Briton.

ARVIRAGUS.

Brief and bold.

EVELINA.

Ah, ſpare the taunt:
He merits not thy wrath. Behold the Druids;
Lo, they advance: with holy reverence firſt
Thou muſt addreſs their ſanctity.

ARVIRAGUS.

I will.
But ſee, proud boy, thou do'ſt not quit the grove,
'Till time allows us parley.

ELIDURUS.

Prince, I mean not.

ARVIRAGUS.

Sages, and ſons of heav'n! Illuſtrious Druids!
Abruptly I approach your ſacred preſence:
Yet ſuch dire tidings———

CHORUS.

On thy peril, peace!
Thou ſtand'ſt accus'd, and by a father's voice,
Of crimes abhorr'd, of cowardice and flight;
And therefore may'ſt not in theſe ſacred groves
Utter polluted accents. Quickly ſay,
Wherefore thou fledſt? For that baſe fact unclear'd
We hold no further converſe.

ARVIRAGUS.

O ye Gods!
Am I the ſon of your *Caractacus*?
And could I fly?

CHORUS.

Waſte not or time or words!
But tell us why thou fled'ſt?

ARVIRAGUS.

I fled not, Druid!
By the great Gods I fled not! Save to ſtop
Our daſtard troops, that baſely turn'd their backs.
I ſtopt, I rallied them, when lo a ſhaft
Of random caſt did level me with earth,
Where pale and ſenſeleſs, as the ſlain around me,
I lay 'till midnight: Then as from long trance
Awoke, I crawl'd upon my feeble limbs

To a lone cottage, where a pitying hind
Lodg'd me, and nouriſh'd me. My ſtrength repair'd,
It boots not that I tell, what humble arts
Compell'd I us'd to ſcreen me from the foe.
How now a peaſant from a beggarly ſcrip
I ſold cheap food to ſlaves, that nam'd the price,
Nor after gave it. Now a minſtrel poor
With ill-tun'd harp, and uncouth deſcant ſhrill
I ply'd a thriftleſs trade, and by such ſh[illegible]
Did win obſcurity to ſhroud my n[illegible]e.
At length to other conqueſts [illegible] the north
Oſtorius led his legions: Safer now,
Yet not ſecure, I to ſome valiant chiefs,
Whom war had ſpar'd, diſcover'd what I was;
And with them plann'd, how ſureſt we might draw
Our ſcatter'd forces to ſome rocky faſtneſs
In rough Caernarvon, there to breathe in freedom,
If not with brave incurſion to oppreſs
The thinly-ſtation'd foe. And ſoon our art
So well avail'd, that now at Snowdon's foot
Full twenty troops of hardy veterans wait
To call my ſire their leader.

CHORUS.

[illegible] Valiant youth——

EVELINA.

He is——I ſaid he was a valiant youth,
Nor has he ſham'd his race.

CHORUS.

We do believe
Thy modeſt tale: And may the righteous Gods
Th[illegible]s [illegible]ned upon thy noble breaſt

Diſcretion's cooling dew. When nurtur'd ſo,
Then, only then, doth valour bloom mature.

ARVIRAGUS.

Yet vain is valour, howſoe'er it bloom:
Druid, the Gods frown on us. All my hopes
Are blaſted; I ſhall ne'er rejoin my friends,
Ne'er bleſs them with my father. Holy men,
I have a tale to tell, will ſhake your ſouls.
Your Mona is invaded; Rome approaches,
Ev'n to theſe grove approaches.

SEMICHORUS.

Horror! horror!

ARVIRAGUS.

Late as I landed on yon higheſt beach,
Where nodding from the rocks the poplars fling
Their ſcatter'd arms, and daſh them in the wave,
There were their veſſels moor'd, as if they ſought
Concealment in the ſhade, and as I paſt
Up yon thick-planted ridge, I 'ſpy'd their helms
Mid breaks and boughs trench'd in the heath below,
Where like a neſt of night-worms did they glitter,
Sprinkling the plain with brightneſs. On I ſped
With ſilent ſtep, yet oft did paſs ſo near,
'Twas next to prodigy, I 'ſcap'd unſeen.

CHORUS.

Their number, Prince?

ARVIRAGUS.

Few, if mine haſty eye
Did find, and count them all.

CHORUS.

O brethren, brethren,

Treaſon

Treaſon and ſacrilege, worſe foes than Rome,
Have led Rome hither. Inſtant ſeize that wretch,
And bring him to our preſence.

CHORUS, ELIDURUS, ARVIRAGUS.

CHORUS.

Say, thou falſe one!
What doom befits the ſlave, who ſells his country?

ELIDURUS.

Death, ſudden death!

CHORUS.

No, ling'ring piece-meal death;
And to ſuch death thy brother and thyſelf
We now devote. Villain, thy deeds are known;
'Tis known, ye led the impious Romans hither
To ſlaughter us ev'n on our holy altars.

ELIDURUS.

That on my ſoul doth lie ſome ſecret grief,
Theſe looks perforce will tell: It is not fear,
Druids, it is not fear that ſhakes me thus;
The great Gods know, it is not: Ye can never:
For, what tho' wiſdom lifts ye next thoſe gods,
Ye cannot, like to them, unlock men's breaſts,
And read their inmoſt thoughts. Ah! that ye could.

ARVIRAGUS.

What haſt thou done?

ELIDURUS.

What, Prince, I will not tell.

CHORUS.

Wretch, there are means——

ELIDURUS.

I know, and terrible means;
And 'tis both fit, that you ſhould try thoſe means,
And I endure them: Yet I think, my patience
Will for ſome ſpace baffle your torturing fury.

CHORUS.

Be that beſt known, when our inflicted goads
Harrow thy fleſh!

ARVIRAGUS.

Stranger, ere this is try'd
Confeſs the whole of thy black perfidy;
So black, that when I look upon thy youth,
Read thy mild eye, and mark thy modeſt brow,
I think indeed, thou durſt not.

ELIDURUS.

Such a crime
Indeed I durſt not; and would rather be
The very wretch thou ſeeſt. I'll ſpeak no more.

CHORUS.

Brethren, 'tis ſo. The virgin's thoughts were juſt;
This youth has been deceiv'd.

ELIDURUS.

Yes, one word more.
You ſay, the Romans have invaded Mona.
Give me a ſword and twenty honeſt Britons,
And I will quell thoſe Romans. Vain demand!
Alas! you cannot: Ye are men of peace:
Religion's ſelf forbids. Lead then to torture.

ARVIRAGUS.

Now on my ſoul this youth doth move me much.

CHORUS.

Think not Religion and our holy office
Doth teach us tamely like the bleating lamb,
To crouch before oppreſſion, and with neck
Outſtretch'd await the ſtroke. Miſtaken boy!
Did not ſtrict juſtice claim thee for her victim,
We might full ſafely ſend thee to theſe Romans,
Inviting their hot charge. Know, when I blow
That ſacred trumpet bound with ſable fi[illegible]
To yonder branching oak, the awf[illegible] ſound
Calls forth a thouſand Briton[illegible] train'd alike
In holy and in martial exerciſe,
Not by ſuch mode and rule, as Romans uſe,
But of that fierce portentous horrible ſort,
As ſhall appall ev'n Romans.

ELIDURUS.

Gracious gods!
Then there are hopes indeed. O call them inſtant,
This Prince will lead them on: I'll follow him,
Tho' in my chains, and ſome way daſh them round
To harm the haughty foe.

ARVIRAGUS.

A thouſand Britons,
And arm'd! O in[illegible]tant blow the ſacred trump,
And let me head them. Yet methinks this youth—

CHORUS.

I know what thou wouldſt ſay, might join thee, Prince.
True, were he free from crime, or had confeſt.

ELIDURUS.

C[illegible]. Ah, think not, I will e'er——

ARVI-

ARVIRAGUS.

Reflect.

Either thyſelf or brother muſt have wrong'd us:
Then why conceal———

ELIDURUS.

Haſt thou a brother? no!
Elſe hadſt thou ſpar'd the word; and yet a ſiſter
Lovely as thine might more than teach thee, Prince,
What 'tis to have a brother. Hear me, Druids,
Tho' I would prize an hour of freedom now
Before an age of any after date:
Tho' I would ſeize it as the gift of heav'n,
And uſe it as heav'n's gift: yet do not think,
I ſo will purchaſe it. Give it me freely,
I yet will ſpurn the boon, and hug my chains,
'Till you do ſwear by your own hoary heads,
My brother ſhall be ſafe.

CHORUS.

Excellent youth!
Thy words do ſpeak thy ſoul, and ſuch a ſoul,
As wakes our wonder. Thou art free; thy brother
Shall be thine honour's pledge! ſo will we uſe him,
As thou art falſe or true.

ELIDURUS.

I aſk no other.

ARVIRAGUS.

Thus then, my fellow-ſoldier, to thy claſp
I give the hand of friendſhip. Noble youth,
We'll ſpeed or die together.

CH

CHORUS.

Hear us, Prince !
Mona permits not, that he fight her battles,
'Till duly purified: For tho' his soul
Took up unwittingly this deed of baseness,
Yet is lustration meet. Learn, that in vice
There is a noisome rankness unperceiv'd
By gross corporeal sense, which so offends
Heaven's pure divinities, as us the stench
Of vapour wafted from sulphureous pool,
Or pois'nous weed obscene. Hence doth the man,
Who ev'n converses with a villain, need
As much purgation, as the pallid wretch
'Scap'd from the walls, where frowning pestilence
Spreads wide her livid banners. For this cause,
Ye Priests, conduct the youth to yonder grove,
And do the needful rites. Mean while ourself
Will lead thee, Prince, unto thy father's presence.—
But hold, the King comes forth.
[*Exeunt Priests with Elidurus.*

CARACTACUS, ARVIRAGUS, CHORUS, EVELINA.

CARACTACUS.

My son, my son !
What joy, what transport, doth thine aged sire
Feel in these filial foldings! Speak not, boy,
Nor interrupt that heart-felt ecstacy
Should strike us mute. I know what thou wouldst say,
Yet prithee, peace. Thy sister's voice hath clear'd thee,
And could excuse find words at this blest moment,
Trust me, I'd give it vent. But 'tis enough,

Thy

Thy father welcomes thee to him and honour:
Honour, that now with rapt'rous certainty
Calls thee his own true offspring. Doſt thou weep?
Ah, if thy tears ſwell not from joy's free ſpring,
I beg thee, ſpare them: I have done thee wrong,
Can make thee no atonement: None, alas!
Thy father ſcarce can bleſs thee, as he ought;
Unbleſt himſelf, beſet with foes around,
Bereft of queen, of kingdom, and of ſoldiers,
He can but give thee portion of his dangers,
Perchance and of his chains: Yet droop not, boy,
Virtue is ſtill thine own.

ARVIRAGUS.

It is, my father;
Pure as from thine illuſtrious fount it came;
And that unſullied, let the world oppreſs us;
Let fraud and falſhood rivet fetters on us;
Still ſhall our ſouls be free: Yet hope is ours,
As well as virtue.

CARACTACUS.

Spoken like a Briton.
True, hope is ours, and therefore let's prepare:
The moments now are precious. Tell us, Druid,
Is it not meet, we ſee the bands drawn out,
And mark their due array?

CHORUS.

Monarch, ev'n now
They ſkirt the grove.

CARACTACUS.

Then let us to their front——

CHO-

CHORUS.

But is the traitor-youth in ſafety lodg'd?

CARACTACUS.

Druid, he fled———

CHORUS.

O fatal flight to Mona!

CARACTACUS.

But what of that? *Arviragus* is here,
My ſon is here, let then the traitor go,
By this he has join'd the Romans: Let him join them,
A ſingle arm, and that a villain's arm,
Can lend but little aid to any powers
Oppos'd to truth and virtue. Come, my ſon,
Let's to the troops, and marſhal them with ſpeed.
That done, we from theſe venerable men
Will claim their ready bleſſing: Then to battle;
And the ſwift ſun ev'n at his purple dawn
Shall ſpy us crown'd with conqueſt, or with death.

[*Exeunt Caractacus, and Arviragus.*

CHORUS, EVELINA.

CHORUS.

What may his flight portend! Say, *Evelina*,
How came this youth to 'ſcape?

EVELINA.

And that to tell
Will fix much blame on my impatient folly:
For, ere your hallow'd lips had given permiſſion,
I flew with eager haſte to bear my father
News of his ſon's return. Inflam'd with that,
Think, how a ſiſter's zealous breaſt muſt glow!

Your looks give mild aſſent. I glow'd indeed
With the dear tale, and ſped me in his ear
To pour the precious tidings: But my tongue
Scarce nam'd *Arviragus*, ere the falſe ſtranger
(As I bethink me ſince) with ſtealthy pace
Fled to the cavern's mouth.

CHORUS.

The king purſued?

EVELINA.

Alas! he mark'd him not, for 'twas the moment,
When he had all to aſk and all to fear,
Touching my brother's valour. Hitherto
His ſafety only, which but little mov'd him,
Had reach'd his ears: But when my tongue unfolded
The ſtory of his bravery and his peril,
O how the tears cours'd plenteous down his cheeks!
How did he lift unto the heav'ns his hands
In ſpeechleſs tranſport! Yet he ſoon bethought him
Of Rome's invaſion, and with fiery glance
Survey'd the cavern round; then ſnatch'd his ſpear,
And menac'd to purſue the flying traitor:
But I with prayers (O pardon, if they err'd)
Withheld his ſtep, for to the left the youth
Had wing'd his way, where the thick underwood
Afforded ſure retreat. Beſides, if found,
Was age a match for youth?

CHORUS.

Maiden, enough,
Better perchance for us, if he was captive:
But in the juſtice of their cauſe, and heav'n,
Do Mona's ſons confide.

BARD, CHORUS, ELIDURUS, EVELINA.

BARD.

Druid, the rites

Are finiſh'd, all ſave that which crowns the reſt,
And which pertains to thy bleſt hand alone:
For that he kneels before thee.

CHORUS.

Take him hence,
We may not truſt him forth to fight our cauſe.

ELIDURUS.

Now by *Andraſte*'s throne———

CHORUS.

Nay, ſwear not, youth,
The tie is broke, that held thy fealty:
Thy brother's fled.

ELIDURUS.

Fled!

CHORUS.

To the Romans fled,
Yes, thou haſt cauſe to tremble.

ELIDURUS.

Ah, *Vellinus!*
Does thus our love, does thus our friendſhip end!
Was I thy brother, youth, and haſt thou left me!
Yes; and how left me, cruel, as thou art,
The victim of thy crimes!

CHORUS.

True, thou muſt die.

ELIDURUS.

I pray ye then on your beſt mercy, fathers,
It may be ſpeedy. I would fain be dead,
If this be life. Yet I muſt doubt ev'n that,

For

For falſhood of this ſtrange ſtupendous ſort
Sets firm-ey'd reaſon on a gaze, miſtruſting,
That what ſhe ſees in palpable plain form,
The ſtars in yon blue arch, theſe woods, theſe caverns,
Are all mere tricks of cozenage, nothing real,
The viſion of a viſion. If he's fled,
I ought to hate this brother.

CHORUS.

Yet thou doſt not.

ELIDURUS.

But when aſtoniſhment will give me leave,
Perchance I ſhall.——And yet he is my brother,
And he was virtuous once. Yes, ye vile Romans,
Yes, I muſt die, before my thirſty ſword
Drinks one rich drop of vengeance. Yet, ye robbers,
Yet will I curſe you with my dying lips:
'Twas you that ſtole away my brother's virtue.

CHORUS.

Now then prepare to die.

ELIDURUS.

I am prepar'd.
Yet, ſince I cannot now (what moſt I wiſh'd)
By manly proweſs guard this lovely maid:
Permit, that on your holieſt earth I kneel,
And pour one fervent prayer for her protection.
Allow me this, for though you think me falſe,
The Gods will hear me.

EVELINA.

I can hold no longer!
O Druid

O Druid, Druid, at thy feet I fall:
Yes, I muſt plead (away with virgin bluſhes)
For ſuch a youth muſt plead. I'll die to ſave him,
O take my life, and let him fight for Mona.

CHORUS.

Virgin, ariſe. His virtue hath redeem'd him,
And he ſhall fight for thee and for his country.
Youth, thank us with thy deeds. The time is ſhort,
And now with reverence take our high luſtration:
Thrice do we ſprinkle thee with day-break dew
Shook from the May-thorn bloſſom; twice and thrice
Touch we thy forehead with our holy wand:
Now thou art fully purg'd. Now riſe reſtor'd
To virtue and to us. Hence then, my ſon,
Hie thee to yonder altar, where our Bards
Shall arm thee duly both with helm and ſword
For warlike enterprize. [*Exit Elidurus.*

CARACTACUS, CHORUS, ARVIRAGUS, EVELINA.

CARACTACUS.

'Tis true, my ſon,
Bold are their bearings, and I fear me not
But they have hearts will not belie their looks.
I like them well. Yet would to righteous heav'n
Thoſe valiant veterans, that on Snowdon guard
Their ſcanty pittance of bleak liberty,
Were here to join them; we would teach theſe wolves,
Tho' we permit their rage to prowl our coaſts,
That vengeance waits them ere they rob our altars.

Hail,

Hail, Druid, hail! we find thy valiant guards
Accoutred ſo, as well beſpeaks the wiſdom
That fram'd their phalanx. We but wait thy bleſſing
To lead them 'gainſt the foe.

CHORUS.

Caractacus!
Behold this ſword: The ſword of old *Belinus*,
Stain'd with the blood of giants, and its name
Triſingus. Many an age its charmed blade
Has ſlept within yon conſecrated trunk.
Lo, I unſheath it, King; I wave it o'er thee;
Mark, what portentous ſtreams of ſcarlet light
Flow from the brandiſh'd falchion. On thy knee
Receive the ſacred pledge.—And mark our words.
By the bright circle of the golden ſun,
By the brief courſes of the errant moon,
By the dread potency of every ſtar
That ſtuds the myſtic zodiac's burning girth,
By each, and all of theſe ſupernal ſigns,
We do adjure thee with this truſty blade,
To guard yon central oak, whoſe holieſt ſtem
Involves the ſpirit of high *Taranis*:
This be thy charge; to which in aid we join
Ourſelves, and our ſage brethren. With our vaſſals
Thy ſon and the Brigantian prince ſhall make
Incurſion on the foe.

CARACTACUS.

In this, and all,
Be ours obſervance meet. Yet ſurely, Druid,
The freſh and active vigour of the youths
Might better ſuit with this important charge.

Not that my heart ſhrinks at the glorious taſk,
But will with ready zeal pour fourth its blood
Upon the ſacred roots, my firmeſt courage
Might fail to ſave. Yet, Fathers, I am old;
And if I fell the foremoſt in the onſet,
Should leave a ſon behind, might ſtill defend you.

CHORUS.

The ſacred adjuration we have utter'd
May never be recall'd.

CARACTACUS.

Then be it ſo.
But do not think, I counſel this thro' fear:
Old as I am, I truſt with half our powers
I could drive back theſe Romans to their ſhips;
Daſtards, that come as doth the cow'ring fowler
To tangle me with ſnares and take me tamely;
Slaves, they ſhall find, that ere they gain their prey,
They have to hunt it boldly with barb'd ſpears,
And meet ſuch conflict, as the chafed boar
Gives to his ſtout aſſailants. O ye Gods!
That I might inſtant face them.

CHORUS.

Be thy ſon's
The onſet.

ARVIRAGUS.

From his ſoul that ſon doth thank ye,
Bleſſing the wiſdom, that preſerves his father
Thus to the laſt. O if the fav'ring Gods
Direct this arm, if their high will permit,
I pour a proſperous vengeance on the foe,

I aſk

I aſk for life no longer, than to crown
The valiant taſk. Steel then, ye powers of heav'n,
Steel my firm ſoul with your own fortitude,
Free from alloy of paſſion. Give me courage,
That knows not rage; revenge, that knows not
malice;
Let me not thirſt for carnage, but for conqueſt:
And conqueſt gain'd, ſleep vengeance in my breaſt,
Ere in its ſheath my ſword.

CARACTACUS.

O hear his father!
If ever raſhneſs ſpur'd me on, great Gods,
To acts of danger thirſting for renown;
If ere my eager ſoul purſu'd its courſe
Beyond juſt reaſon's limit, viſit not
My faults on him. I am the thing you made me,
Vindictive, bold, precipitate, and fierce:
But as you gave to him a milder mind,
O bleſs him, bleſs him with a milder fate!

EVELINA.

Nor yet unheard let *Evelina* pour
Her pray'rs and tears. O hear a hapleſs maid,
That ev'n thro' half the years her life has number'd,
Ev'n nine long years has drag'd a trembling being,
Beſet with pains and perils. Give her peace;
And, to endear it more, be that bleſt peace
Won by her brother's ſword O bleſs his arm,
And bleſs his valiant followers, One, and all.

ELIDURUS *entering armed.*

Hear, heav'n! and let this pure and virgin prayer
Plead ev'n for *Elidurus*, whoſe ſad ſoul

Cannot look up to your immortal thrones,
And urge his own requeſt: Elſe would he aſk,
That all the dangers of th'approaching fight
Might fall on him alone: That every ſpear
The Romans wield might at his breaſt be aim'd;
Each arrow darted on his ratling helm;
That ſo the brother of this beauteous maid,
Returning ſafe with victory and peace,
Might bear them to her boſom.

CHORUS.

Now riſe all,
And heav'n, that knows, what moſt ye ought to aſk,
Grant all ye ought to have. Behold, the ſtars
Are faded; univerſal darkneſs reigns.
Now is the dreadful hour, now will our torches
Glare with more livid horror, now our ſhrieks
And clanking arms will more appall the foe.
But heed, ye Bards, that for the ſign of onſet
Ye ſound the antienteſt of all your rhymes,
Whoſe birth tradition notes not, nor who fram'd
Its lofty ſtrains: The force of that high air
Did *Julius* feel, when, fir'd by it, our fathers
Firſt drove him recreant to his ſhips; and ill
Had far'd his ſecond landing, but that fate
Silenc'd the maſter Bard, who led the ſong.
Now forth, brave Pair! Go, with our bleſſing go;
Mute be the march, as ye aſcend the hill:
Then, when ye hear the ſound of our ſhrill trumpet,
Fall on the foe.

CARACTACUS.

Now glory be thy guide;
Pride of my ſoul, go forth and conquer.

EVELINA.

Brother,
Yet one embrace. O thou much honour'd Stranger,
I charge thee fight by my dear brother's side,
And shield him from the foe; for he is brave,
And will with bold and well-directed arm
Return thy succour.

[*Exeunt Arviragus and Elidurus.*

CHORUS.

Now, ye Priests, with speed
Strew on the altar's height your sacred leaves,
And light the morning flame. But why is this?
Why doth our brother *Mador* snatch his harp
From yonder bough? Why this way bend his step?

CARACTACUS.

He is entranc'd. The fillet bursts, that bound
His liberal locks; his snowy vestments fall
In ampler folds; and all his floating form
Doth seem to glisten with divinity!
Yet is he speechless. Say, thou Chief of Bards,
What is there in this airy vacancy,
That thou with fiery and irregular glance
Shouldst scan thus wildly? wherefore heaves thy breast?
Why starts——

CHORUS.

ODE.

Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread,
That shook the earth with thund'ring tread?
'Twas Death.—In haste
The Warrior past;

High

High tower'd his helmed head:
I mark'd his mail, I mark'd his ſhield,
I 'ſpy'd the ſparkling of his ſpear,
I ſaw his giant arm the falchion wield;
Wide wav'd the bick'ring blade, and fir'd the angry air.

On me (he cry'd) my Britons wait,
To lead you to the field of fate
I come: Yon car,
That cleaves the air,
Deſcends to throne my ſtate:
I mount your Champion and your God.
My proud ſteeds neigh beneath the thong:
Hark! to my wheels of braſs, that rattle loud!
Hark! to my * clarion ſhrill, that brays the woods among!

Fear not now the fever's fire,
Fear not now the death-bed groan,
Pangs that torture, pains that tire,
Bed-rid age with feeble moan:
Theſe domeſtic terrors wait
Hourly at my palace gate;
And when o'er ſlothful realms my rod I wave,
Theſe on the tyrant king and coward ſlave
Ruſh with vindictive rage, and drag them to their grave.

But, ye my Sons, at this high hour
Shall ſhare the fulneſs of my power:

* Here one of the Druids blows the ſacred trumpet.

From all your bows,
In level'd rows,
My own dread ſhafts ſhall ſhower.
Go then to conqueſt, gladly go,
Deal forth my dole of deſtiny,
With all my fury daſh the trembling foe
Down to thoſe darkſome dens, where Rome's pale ſpectres lie.

Where creeps the ninefold ſtream profound
Her black inexorable round,
And on the bank,
To willows dank,
The ſhiv'ring ghoſts are bound.
Twelve thouſand creſcents all ſhall ſwell
To full-orb'd pride, and fading die,
Ere they again in life's gay manſions dwell:
Not ſuch the meed that crowns the ſons of Liberty.

No, my Britons! battle-ſlain,
Rapture gilds your parting hour:
I, that all deſpotic reign,
Claim but there a moment's power.
Swiftly the ſoul of Britiſh flame
Animates ſome kindred frame.
Swiftly to life and light triumphant flies,
Exults again in martial ecſtacies,
Again for freedom fights, again for freedom dies.

CARACTACUS.

It does, it does! unconquer'd, undiſmay'd,
The Britiſh ſoul revives—Champ[illegible]ad on,
I follow—give me way. Some bleſſed ſhaft
Will rid me of this clog of cumb'rous age;

And I again shall in some happier mould
Rise to redeem my country.

CHORUS.

Stay thee, Prince,
And mark what clear and amber-skirted clouds
Rise from the altar's verge, and cleave the skies:
O 'tis a prosperous omen! Soon expect
To hear glad tidings.

CARACTACUS.

I will send them to thee.

CHORUS.

But see, a Bard approaches, and he bears them:
Else is his eye no herald to his heart.

BARD, CHORUS, CARACTACUS.

CARACTACUS.

Speedily tell thy tale.

BARD.

A tale like mine,
I trust your ears will willingly pursue
Thro' each glad circumstance. First, Monarch, learn,
The Roman troop is fled.

CHORUS.

Great Gods, we thank ye!

CARACTACUS.

Fought they not ere they fled? O tell me all.

BARD.

Silent, as night that wrapt us in her veil,
We pac'd up yonder hill, whose woody ridge
O'erhung the ambush'd foe. No sound was heard,

Step felt, or ſight deſcry'd: for ſafely hid,
Beneath the purple pall of ſacrifice
Did ſleep our holy fire, nor ſaw the air,
'Till to that paſs we came, where whilom *Brute*
Planted his five hoar altars. To our rites,
Then ſwift we haſted, and in one ſhort moment
The rocky piles were cloth'd with livid flame.
Near each a white-rob'd Druid, whoſe ſtern voice
Thunder'd deep execrations on the foe.
Now wak'd our horrid ſymphony, now all
Our harps terrific hang: Mean while the grove
Trembled, the altars ſhook, and thro' our ranks
Our ſacred ſiſters ruſh'd in ſable robes,
With air diſhevel'd, and funereal brands
Hurl'd round with menacing fury. On they ruſh'd
In fierce and frantic mood, as is their wont
Amid the magic rites, they do to Night
In their deep dens below. Motions like theſe
Were never dar'd before in open air!

CHORUS.

Did I not ſay, we had a pow'r within us,
That might appall ev'n Romans?

BARD.

And it did.
They ſtood aghaſt, and to our vollied darts,
That thick as hail fell on their helms and corſlets,
Scarce rais'd a warding ſhield. The ſacred trumpet
Then rent the air, and inſtant at the ſignal
Ruſh'd down *Arviragus* with all our vaſſals;
A hot, but ſhort-liv'd, conflict th[illegible]'d:
For ſoon they fled. I ſaw the Romans fly,
Before I left the field.

CARACTACUS.

My ſon purſu'd!

BARD.

The Prince and *Elidurus*, like twin lions,
Did ſide by ſide engage. Death ſeem'd to guide
Their ſwords, no ſtroke fell fruitleſs, every wound
Gave him a victim.

CARACTACUS.

Thus my friend *Ebrancus!*
Ill-fated prince! didſt thou and I in youth
Unite our valours. In his prime he fell,
On Conway's banks I ſaw him fall, and ſlew
His murderer.—But how far did they purſue?

BARD.

Ev'n to the ſhips: For I deſcry'd the rout,
Far as the twilight gleam would aid my ſight.

CARACTACUS.

Now thanks to the bright ſtar that rul'd his birth;
Yes, he will ſoon return to claim my bleſſing,
And he ſhall have it pour'd in tears of joy
On his bold breaſt! methought I heard a ſtep:
Is it not his?

BARD.

'Tis ſome of our own train,
And as I think, they lead ſix Romans captive.

CHORUS, CARACTACUS, CAPTIVES.

CHORUS.

My brethren! bear the priſoners to the cavern,
'Till we demand them.

Pauſe ye yet a while.
They ſeem of bold demeanor, and have helms,
That ſpeak them leaders. Hear me, Romans, hear.
That you are captives is the chance of war:
Yet captives as ye are, in Britain's eye
Ye are not ſlaves. Barbarians tho' ye call us,
We know the native rights, man claims from man,
And therefore never ſhall we gall your necks
With chains, or drag you at our ſcythed cars
In arrogance of triumph. Nor 'till taught
By Rome (what Britain ſure ſhould ſcorn to learn)
Her avarice, will we barter you for gold.
True, ye are captives, and our country's ſafety
Forbids, we give you back to liberty:
We give you therefore to th' immortal Gods,
To them we lift you in the radiant cloud
Of ſacrifice. They may in limbs of freedom
Replace your free-born ſouls, and their high mercy
Haply ſhall to ſome better world advance you;
Or elſe in this reſtore that golden gift,
Which loſt, leaves life a burden. Does there breathe
A wretch ſo 'pall'd with the vain fear of death
Can call this cruelty? 'tis love, 'tis mercy,
And grant, ye Gods, if ere I'm made a captive,
I meet the like fair treatment from the foe,
Whoſe ſtronger ſtar quells mine. Now lead them on,
And, while they live, treat them, as men ſhould men,
And not as Rome treats Britain. [*Exeunt Captives.*
Druid, theſe,
Ev'n ſhoud their chief eſcape, may to the Gods
In ſacrifice——Whence was that ſhriek?

EVELINA, CARACTACUS, CHORUS.

EVELINA.

My father,
Support me, take me trembling to your arms;
All is not well. Ah me, my fears o'ercome me!

CARACTACUS.

What means my child?

EVELINA.

Alas we are betray'd.
Ev'n now as wandring in yon eaſtern grove
I call'd the Gods to aid us, the dread ſound
Of many haſty ſteps did meet mine ear:
This way they preſt.

CARACTACUS.

Daughter, thy fears are vain.

EVELINA.

Methought I ſaw the flame of lighted brands,
And what did glitter to my dazzled ſight,
Like ſwords and helms.

CARACTACUS.

All, all the feeble coinage
Of maiden fear.

EVELINA.

Nay, if mine ear miſtook not,
I heard the traitor's voice, who that way 'ſcap'd,
Calling to arms.

CARACTACUS.

Away with idle terrors!

Know, thy brave brother's helm is crown'd with
conqueſt,
Our Foes are fled, their leaders are our captives.
Smile, my lov'd child, and imitate the ſun,
That riſes ruddy from behind yon oaks
To hail him victor.

CHORUS.

That the riſing ſun!
O horror! horror! ſacrilegious fires
Devour our groves: They blaze, they blaze! O
ſound
The trump again; recall the prince, or all
Is loſt.

CARACTACUS.

Druid, where is thy fortitude?
Do not I live? Is not this holy ſword
Firm in my graſp? I will preſerve your groves.
Britons, I go: Let thoſe that dare die nobly,
Follow my ſtep. [*Exit Caractacus.*

EVELINA.

O whither does he go?
Return, return: Ye holy men, recall him.
What is his arm againſt a hoſt of Romans?
O I have loſt a father!

CHORUS.

Ruthleſs Gods!
Ye take away our ſouls: A general panic
Reigns thro' the grove. O fly, my brethren, fly,
To aid the king, fly to preſerve your altars!
Alas! 'tis all in vain; our fate is fix'd.
Look there, look there, thou miſerable maid!

Behold

Behold ... thy bleeding brother.

A[...]VIRAGUS, ELIDURUS, EVELINA, CHORUS.

ARVIRAGUS.

Thanks, good youth!
Safe haſt thou brought me to that holy ſpot,
Where I did wiſh to die. Support me ſtill.
O, I am ſick to death. Yet one ſtep more:
Now lay me gently down. I would drag ou[t]
This life, tho' at ſome coſt of throbs and pangs,
Juſt long enough to claim my father's bleſſing,
And ſigh my laſt breath in my ſiſter's arms.——
And here ſhe kneels, poor maid! all dumb with grief
Reſtrain thy ſorrow, gentleſt *Evelina*,
True, thou doſt ſee me bleed: I bleed to death.

EVELINA.

Say'ſt thou to death? O Gods! the barbed ſhaft
Is buried in his breaſt. Yes, he muſt die;
And I, alas! am doom'd to ſee him die.
Where are your healing arts, medicinal herbs,
Ye holy men, your wonder-working ſpells?
Pluck me but out this ſhaft, ſtanch but this blood,
And I will call down bleſſings on your heads
With ſuch a fervency—And can ye not!
Then let me beg you on my bended knee,
Give to my miſery ſome opiate drug,
May ſhut up all my ſenſes.—Yes, good fathers,
Mingle the potion ſo, that it may kill me
Juſt at the inſtant, this poor languiſher
Heaves his laſt ſigh.

ARVIRAGUS.

Talk not thus wildly, ſiſte

Think on our father's age———

EVELINA.

Alas! my brother!
We have no father now; or if we have,
He is a captive.

ARVIRAGUS.

Captive! O my wound!
It ſtings me now—But is it ſo? [*Turning to the Chorus.*

CHORUS.

Alas!
We know no more, ſave that he ſallied ſingle
To meet the foe, whoſe unexpected hoſt
Round by the eaſt had wound their fraudful march,
And fir'd our groves.

ELIDURUS.

O fatal, fatal valour!
Then is he ſeiz'd, or ſlain.

ARVIRAGUS.

Too ſure he is!
Druid, not half the Romans met our ſwords;
We found the fraud too late: the reſt are yonder.

CHORUS.

How could they gain the paſs?

ARVIRAGUS.

The wretch, that fled
That way, return'd, conducting half their powers;
And—But thy pardon, youth, I will not wound thee,
He is thy brother.

ELIDURUS.

Thus my honeſt ſword
Shall force the blood from the deteſted heart,
That holds alliance with him.

ARVIRAGUS.

Elidurus,
Hold, on our friendſhip, hold. Thou noble youth,
Look on this innocent maid. She muſt to Rome,
Captive to Rome. Thou ſeeſt warm life flow from me,
Ere long ſhe'll have no brother. Heav'n's my witneſs,
I do not wiſh, that thou ſhouldſt live the ſlave
Of Rome: But yet ſhe is my ſiſter.

ELIDURUS.

Prince,
Thou urgeſt that, might make me drag an age
In fetters worſe than Roman. I will live,
And while I live———

Enter BARD.

Fly to your caverns, Druids,
The grove's beſet around. The chief approaches.

CHORUS.

Let him approach, we will confront his pride,
The Seer that rules amid the groves of Mona
Has not to fear his fury. What tho' age
Slackens our ſinews; what tho' ſhield and ſword
Give not their iron aid to guard our body;
Yet virtue arms our ſoul, and 'gainſt that panoply
What 'vails the rage of robbers? Let him come.

ARVIRAGUS.

I faint apace.—Ye venerable men,

If ye can ſave this body from pollution,
If ye can tomb me in this ſacred place,
I truſt ye will. I fought to ſave theſe groves,
And, fruitleſs tho' I fought, ſome grateful oak,
I truſt will ſpread its reverential gloom
O'er my pale aſhes—Ah! that pang was death!
My ſiſter, Oh!——— [*Dies.*

ELIDURUS.

She faints! Ah raiſe her!—

EVELINA.

Yes,
Now he is dead. I felt his ſpirit go
In a cold ſigh, and as it paſt, methought
It paus'd a while, and trembled on my lips!
Take me not from him: Breathleſs as he is,
He is my brother ſtill, and if the Gods
Do pleaſe to grace him with ſome happier being,
They ne'er can give to him a fonder ſiſter.

CHORUS.

Brethren, ſurround the corſe, and, ere the foe
Approaches, chaunt with meet ſolemnity
That grateful dirge your dying champion claims.

SEMICHORUS.

Lo, where incumbent o'er the ſhade
Rome's rav'ning eagle bows her beaked head!
Yet while a moment fate affords,
While yet a moment freedom ſtays,
That moment, which outweighs
Eternity's unmeaſur'd hoards,
Shall Mona's grateful Bards employ
To hymn their godlike hero to the ſky.

SEMI-

SEMICHORUS.

Ring out, ye mortal ſtrings ;
Anſwer, thou heavenly harp, inſtinct with ſpirit all,
That o'er the jaſper arch ſelf-warbling ſwings
Of bleſt *Andraſte*'s throne :
Thy ſacred ſounds alone
Can celebrate the fall
Of bold *Arviragus*—*Enter Aulus Didius and Romans.*

AULUS DIDIUS, CHORUS, EVELINA, ELIDURUS.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Ye bloody prieſts,
Behold we burſt on your infernal rites,
And bid you pauſe. Inſtant reſtore our ſoldiers,
Nor hope that ſuperſtition's ruthleſs ſtep
Shall wade in Roman gore. Ye ſavage men,
Did not our laws give licence to all faiths,
We would o'erturn your altars, headlong heave
Theſe ſhapeleſs ſymbols of your barbarous Gods,
And let the golden ſun into your caves.

CHORUS.

Servant of *Cæſar*, has thine impious tongue
Spent the black venom of its blaſphemy ?
It has. Then take our curſes on thine head,
Ev'n his fell curſes, who doth reign in Mona,
Vicegerent of thoſe Gods thy pride inſults.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Bold prieſt. I ſcorn thy curſes, and thyſelf.
Soldiers, go ſearch the caves, and free the priſoners.
Take heed, ye ſeize *Caractacus* alive.
Arreſt yon youth ; load him with heavieſt irons,

He

He ſhall to *Cæſar* anſwer for his crime.

ELIDURUS.

I ſtand prepar'd to triumph in my crime.

AULUS DIDIUS.

'Tis well, proud boy—Look to the beauteous ma[illegible],
[*To the ſoldiers.*
That tranc'd in grief, bends o'er yon bleeding corſe,
Reſpect her ſorrows.

EVELINA.

Hence, ye barbarous men,
Ye ſhall not take him weltring thus in blood,
To ſhew at Rome, what Britiſh virtue was.
Avaunt! The breathleſs body that ye touch
Was once *Arviragus!*

AULUS DIDIUS.

Fear us not, Princeſs,
We reverence the dead.

CHORUS.

Would too to heav'n,
Ye reverenc'd the Gods but ev'n enough
Not to debaſe with ſlavery's cruel chain,
What they created free.

AULUS DIDIUS.

The Romans fight
Not to enſlave, but humanize the world.

CHORUS.

Go too, we will not parley with thee, Roman:
Inſtant pronounce our doom.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Hear it, and thank us.

This once our clemency ſhall ſpare your groves,
If at our call ye yield the Britiſh king:
Yet learn, when next ye aid the foes of *Cæſar*,
That each old oak, whoſe ſolemn gloom ye boaſt,
Shall bow beneath our axes.

CHORUS.

Be they blaſted,
Whene'er their ſhade forgets to ſhelter virtue.

Enter BARD.

Mourn, Mona, mourn. *Caractacus* is captive!
And doſt thou ſmile, falſe Roman? do not think
He fell an eaſy prey. Know, ere he yielded,
Thy braveſt veterans bled. He too, thy ſpy,
The baſe Brigantian prince, hath ſeal'd his fraud
With death. Burſting thro' armed ranks, that hemm'd
The caitiff round, the brave *Caractacus*
Seiz'd his falſe throat; and as he gave him death
Indignant thunder'd, 'Thus is my laſt ſtroke
'The ſtroke of juſtice.' Numbers then oppreſt him:
I ſaw the ſlave, that cowardly behind
Pinion'd his arms; I ſaw the ſacred ſword
Writh'd from his graſp: I ſaw, what now ye ſee,
Inglorious ſight! thoſe barbarous bonds upon him.

CARACTACUS, AULUS DIDIUS, CHORUS, &c. CARACTACUS.

Romans, methinks the malice of your tyrant
Might furniſh heavier chains. Old as I am,
And wither'd as you ſee theſe war-worn limbs,
Truſt me, they ſhall ſupport the weightieſt load
Injuſtice dares impoſe.——

Proud-

Proud-crefted foldier! [To Didius.
Who feem'ft the mafter-mover in this bufinefs,
Say, doft thou read lefs terror on my brow,
Than when thou met'ft me in the fields of war
Heading my nations? No, my free-born foul
Has fcorn ftill left to fparkle thro' thefe eyes,
And frown defiance on thee.—Is it thus!
[*Seeing his fon's body.*
Then I'm indeed a captive. Mighty Gods!
My foul, my foul fubmits: Patient it bears
The pond'rous load of grief ye heap upon it.
Yes, it will grovel in this fhatter'd breaft,
And be the fad tame thing, it ought to be
Coopt in a fervile body.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Droop not, King.
When *Claudius*, the great mafter of the world,
Shall hear the noble ftory of thy valour,
His pity——

CARACTACUS.

Can a Roman pity, foldier?
And if he can, Gods! muft a Briton bear it?
Arviragus, my bold, my breathlefs boy,
Thou haft efcap'd fuch pity; thou art free.
Here in high Mona fhall thy noble limbs
Reft in a noble grave; pofterity
Shall to thy tomb with annual reverence bring
Sepulchral ftones, and pile them to the clouds:
Whilft mine——

AULUS DIDIUS.

The morn doth haften our departure.

Prepare

Prepare thee, King, to go: A fav'ring gale
Now swells our sails.

CARACTACUS.

Inhuman, that thou art!
Doſt thou deny a moment for a father
To ſhed a few warm tears o'er his dead ſon?
I tell thee, chief, this act might claim a life,
To do it duly; even a longer life,
Than ſorrow ever ſuffer'd. Cruel man!
And thou denieſt me moments. Be it ſo.
I know you Romans weep not for your children;
Ye triumph o'er your tears, and think it valour:
I triumph in my tears. Yes, beſt-lov'd boy,
Yes, I can weep, can fall upon thy corſe,
And I can tear my hairs, theſe few grey hairs,
The only honours war and age have left me.
Ah ſon! thou might'ſt have rul'd o'er many nations,
As did thy royal anceſtry: But I,
Raſh that I was, ne'er knew the golden curb
Diſcretion hangs on brav'ry: Elſe perchance
Theſe men, that faſten fetters on thy father,
Had ſu'd to him for peace, and claim'd his friendſhip.

AULUS DIDIUS.

But thou waſt ſtill implacable to Rome,
And ſcorn'd her friendſhip.

CARACTACUS *ſtarting up from the body.*

Soldier, I had arms,
Had neighing ſteeds to whirl my iron cars,
Had wealth, dominion. Doſt thou wonder, Roman,
I fought to ſave them? What if Cæſar aims

To

To lord it universal o'er the world,
Shall the world tamely crouch at *Cæsar*'s footstool?

AULUS DIDIUS.

Read in thy fate our answer. Yet if sooner
Thy pride had yielded—

CARACTACUS.

Thank thy Gods, I did not.
Had it been so, the glory of thy master,
Like my misfortunes, had been short and trivial,
Oblivion's ready prey: Now after struggling
Nine years, and that right bravely 'gainst a tyrant,
I am his slave to treat as seems him good;
If cruelly, 'twill be an easy task
To bow a wretch, alas! how bow'd already!
Down to the dust: If well, his clemency,
When trick'd and varnish'd by your glossing penmen,
Will shine in honour's annals, and adorn
Himself; it boots not me. Look there, look there,
The slave that shot that dart, kill'd ev'ry hope
Of lost *Caractacus*! Arise, my daughter.
Alas! poor Prince! art thou too in vile fetters?
[*To Elidurus.*
Come hither, youth: Be thou to me a son,
To her a brother. Thus with trembling arms
I lead you forth; children, we go to Rome.
Weep'st thou, my girl? I prithee hoard thy tears
For the sad meeting of thy captive mother:
For we have much to tell her, much to say
Of these good men, who nurtur'd us in Mona;
Much of the fraud and malice, that pursu'd us;
Much of her son, who pour'd his precious blood

To

To ſave his ſire and ſiſter: Think'ſt thou, maid,
Her gentleneſs can hear the tale, and live?
And yet ſhe muſt. O Gods, I grow a talker!
Grief and old age are ever full of words:
But I'll be mute. Adieu! ye holy men;
Yet one look more—Now lead us hence for ever.

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

I WAS aware, when I ſent you my * Poem, that it would be liable to the very objections you make to it. Yet perhaps they will be obviated to your ſatisfaction, when I have laid before you (as indeed I ought to have done at firſt) the original idea which led me to chuſe ſuch a ſubject, and to execute it in ſo peculiar a manner.

Had I intended to give an exact copy of the ancient Drama, your objections to the preſent Poem would be unanſwerable. But my deſign was much leſs confined. I meant only to purſue the antient method, ſo far as it is probable a Greek Poet, were he alive, would now do, in order to adapt himſelf to the genius of our times, and the character of our Tragedy. According to this notion, every thing was to be allowed to the preſent taſte, which nature and Ariſtotle could poſſibly diſpenſe with; and nothing of intrigue or refinement was to be admitted, at which antient judgment could reaſonably take offence. Good ſenſe, as well as antiquity, preſcribed an adherence to the three great Unities; theſe therefore were ſtrictly obſerved. But on the other hand, to follow the modern maſters in thoſe reſpects wherein they had not ſo faultily deviated from their predeceſſors, a ſtory was choſen, in which the tender rather than the noble paſſions were predominant,

NOTE.

* ELFRIDA, to which theſe letters were prefixt in the former Editions of that Poem.

and in which even love had the principal ſhare. Characters too were drawn as nearly approaching to private ones, as Tragic dignity would permit; and affections raiſed rather from the impulſe of common humanity, than the diſtreſſes of royalty and the fate of kingdoms. Beſide this, for the ſake of natural embelliſhment, and to reconcile mere modern readers to that ſimplicity of fable, in which I thought it neceſſary to copy the Ancients, I contrived to lay the ſcene in an old romantic foreſt. For, by this means, I was enabled to enliven the Poem by various touches of paſtoral deſcription; not affectedly brought in from the ſtore-houſe of a pictureſque imagination, but neceſſarily reſulting from the ſcenery of the place itſelf: A beauty ſo extremely ſtriking in the *Comus* of Milton, and the *As you like it* of Shakeſpear; and of which the Greek Muſe (though fond of rural Imagery) has afforded few examples, beſides that admirable one in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles.

By this idea I could wiſh you to regulate your criticiſm. I need not, I think, obſerve to you that theſe deviations from the practice of the Antients may be reaſonably defended. For we were long ſince agreed, that where Love does not degenerate into epiſodical gallantry, but makes the foundation of the diſtreſs, it is, from the univerſality of its influence, a paſſion very proper for Tragedy. And I have ſeen you too much moved at the repreſentation of ſome of our beſt Tragedies of private ſtory, to believe you will condemn me for making the other deviation.

LETTER II.

I AM glad, you approve the method, I have taken, of ſoftening the rigour of the old Drama. If I have, indeed, ſoftened it ſufficiently for the modern taſte, without parting with any of the eſſentials of the Greek method, I have obtained my purpoſe: which was to obviate ſome of the popular objections made to the antient form of Tragedy. For the current Opinion, you know, is, that by the ſtrict adherence to the Unities, it reſtrains the genius of the Poet; by the ſimplicity of its conduct, it diminiſhes the pathos of the fable; and, by the admiſſion of a continued chorus, prevents that agreeable embarraſs, which awakens our attention, and intereſts our paſſions.

The univerſal veneration, which we pay to the name of Shakeſpear, at the ſame time that it has improved our reliſh for the higher beauties of Poetry, has undoubtedly been the ground-work of all this falſe criticiſm. That diſregard, which, in compliance merely with the taſte of the times, he ſhewed of all the neceſſary rules of the Drama, hath ſince been conſidered as a characteriſtic of his vaſt and original genius, and conſequently ſet up as a model for ſucceeding writers. Hence M. Voltaire remarks very juſtly, "que le merite de cet auteur "a perdu le Theatre Anglois. Le tems qui ſeul "fait la reputation des hommes, rend à la fin leurs "defauts reſpectables."

Yet, notwithstanding the absurdity of this low superstition, the notion is so popular amongst Englishmen, that I fear it will never be entirely discredited, till a poet rises up amongst us with a genius as elevated and daring as Shakespeare's, and a judgment as sober and chastised as Racine's. But as it seems too long to wait for this prodigy, it will not surely be improper for any one of common talents, who would entertain the public without indulging its caprice, to take the best models of antiquity for his guides; and to adapt those models, as near as may be, to the manners and taste of his own times. Unless he do both, he will, in effect, do nothing. For it cannot be doubted, that the many gross faults of our stage are owing to the complaisance and servility, with which the ordinary run of writers have ever humoured that illiterate, whimsical, or corrupted age, in which it was their misfortune to be born.

Milton you will tell me, is a noble exception to this observation. He is so, and would have been a nobler, had he not run into the contrary extreme. The contempt in which, perhaps with justice, he held the age he lived in, prevented him from condescending either to amuse or instruct it. He had, before, given to his unworthy Countrymen the noblest Poem that genius, conducted by antient art could produce; and he had seen them receive it with disregard, if not with dislike. Conscious therefore of his own dignity, and of their demerit, he looked to posterity, only for his reward, and to posterity only directed his future labours. Hence it was perhaps that he form-

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ed his *Samſon Agoniſtes* on a model more ſimple and ſevere than Athens herſelf would have demanded; and took Æſchylus for his maſter rather than Sophocles or Euripides: intending by this conduct to put as great a diſtance as poſſible between himſelf and his contemporary writers; and to make his work (as he himſelf ſaid) *much different from what amongſt them paſſed for the beſt.* The ſucceſs of the Poem was, accordingly, what one would have expected. The age, it appeared in, treated it with total neglect; neither hath that poſterity, to which he appealed, and which has done juſtice to moſt of his other writings, as yet given to this excellent piece its full meaſure of popular and univerſal fame. Perhaps, in your cloſet, and that of a few more, who unaffectedly admire genuine nature and ancient ſimplicity, the Agoniſtes may hold a diſtinguiſhed rank. Yet, ſurely, we cannot ſay (in Hamlet's phraſe) "*that it pleaſes the Million; it is ſtill Caviar to the* "*general*."

Hence, I think, I may conclude, that unleſs one would be content with a very late and very learned poſterity, Milton's conduct in this point ſhould not be followed. A Writer of tragedy muſt certainly adapt himſelf more to the general taſte; becauſe the Dramatic, of all kinds of Poetry, ought to be moſt univerſally reliſhed and underſtood. The Lyric Muſe addreſſes herſelf to the imagination of a reader; the Didactic to his judgment; but the Tragic ſtrikes directly on his paſſions. Few men have a ſtrength of imagination capable of purſuing the flights of Pindar; many have not a clearneſs of apprehenſion

 ſuited

ſuited to the reaſonings of Lucretius and Pope: But every man has paſſions to be excited; and every man feels them excited by Shakeſpeare.

But, though Tragedy be thus chiefly directed to the heart, it muſt be obſerved, that it will ſeldom attain its end without the concurrent approbation of the judgment. And to procure this, the artificial conſtruction of the fable goes a great way. In France, the excellence of their ſeveral poets is chiefly meaſured by this ſtandard. And amongſt our own writers, if you except Shakeſpeare (who indeed ought, for his other virtues, to be exempt from common rules) you will find, that the moſt regular of their compoſitions is generally reckoned their *Chef d'oeuvre*, witneſs the *All for Love* of Dryden, the *Venice preſerved* of Otway, and the *Jane Shore* of Rowe.

LETTER III.

THE ſcheme, you propoſed in your laſt, is I own practicable enough. Undoubtedly, moſt part of the Dialogue of the Chorus might be put into the mouth of an Emma or Matilda, who with ſome little ſhew of ſiſterly concernment, might be eaſily made to claim kindred with Earl Athelwold. Nay, by the addition of a few unneceſſary incidents, which would coſt me no more than they are worth in contriving, and an unmeaning perſonage or two, who would be as little expence in creating, I believe I could

could quickly make the whole tolerably fit for an Engliſh Audience.

But for all this I cannot perſuade myſelf to enter upon the taſk. I have, I know not how (like many of my betters) contracted a kind of veneration for the old Chorus: and am willing to think it eſſential to the Tragic Drama. You ſhall hear the reaſons that incline me to this judgment. They reſpect the *Poet* and the *Audience.*

It is agreed, I think, on all hands, that in the conduct of a fable, the admiſſion of a Chorus lays a neceſſary reſtraint on the *Poet.* The two Unities, of time and place, are eſteemed by ſome of leſs conſequence in our modern Tragedy, than the third Unity of Action; but admit a Chorus, and you muſt, of neceſſity, reſtore them to thoſe equal rights, which they antiently enjoyed, and yet claim, by the Charter of Ariſtotle. For the difference, which the uſe of the Chorus makes, is this: The modern Drama contents itſelf with a fact *repreſented*; the antient requires it to be *repreſented before Spectators.* Now as it cannot be ſuppoſed, that theſe Spectators ſhould accompany the chief perſonages into private apartments, one ſingle Scene, or *unity of Place*, becomes ſtrictly neceſſary. And as theſe Spectators are aſſembled on purpoſe to obſerve and bear a part in the action, the *time* of that action becomes, of courſe, that of the ſpectacle or repreſentation itſelf; it being unreaſonable to make the Spectators attend ſo long, as the Poet, in bringing about his Cataſtrophe, may require. And this is uſually the practice of the antient Stage. The mo-

dern, on the contrary, regards very little these two capital restraints; and its disuse of the Chorus helps greatly to conceal the absurdity. For the Poet, without offending so much against the laws of probability, may lead his personages from one part to another of the same palace or city, when they have only a paultry Servant or insignificant Confidant to attend them. He may think himself at liberty to spend two or three days, months, or even years, in compleating his story; to clear the stage at the end, or, if he pleases, in the middle of every act: and, being under no controul of the Chorus, he can break the continuity of the Drama, just where he thinks it convenient; and, by the assistance of a brisk fugue and a good violin, can persuade his audience, that as much time has elapsed as his Hero's, or rather his own distress, may demand.

Hence it is, that secret intrigues become (as Mr. Dryden gravely calls them) the *beauties of our modern Stage*. Hence it is, that Incidents and Bustle, and *Business*, supply the place of Simplicity, Nature and Pathos: A happy change, perhaps, for the generality of writers, who might otherwise find it impossible to fill *cette longue carriere de cinq actes*, which a Writer, sufficiently experienced in these matters says, *est si prodigieusement difficile à remplir sans Episodes.*

But, whatever these Play-makers may have gained by rejecting the Chorus, the true Poet has lost considerably by it. For he has lost a graceful and natural resource to the embellishments of Picturesque Description, sublime allegory, and whatever else comes under the denomination of *pure Poetry.*

Shakespeare,

Shakeſpeare, indeed, had the power of introducing this naturally, and, what is moſt ſtrange, of joining it with *pure paſſion.* But I make no doubt if we had a Tragedy of his formed on the Greek model, we ſhould find in it more frequent, if not nobler inſtances of his high Poetical capacity, than in any ſingle compoſition he has left us. I think you have a proof of this in thoſe parts of his hiſtorical plays, which are called Chorus's, and written in the common Dialogue metre. And your imagination will eaſily conceive, how fine an ode the deſcription of the Night preceding the battle of Agincourt, would have made in his hands; and what additional grace it would receive from that form of compoſition.

With the means of introducing Poetry naturally is loſt, alſo, the opportunity of conveying moral reflections with grace and propriety. But this comes more properly under conſideration, when I give you my thoughts on the advantage the audience received from a well-conducted Chorus.

LETTER IV.

IN my laſt I took no notice of that ſuperior pomp and majeſty, which the Chorus neceſſarily added to the ſcene of the Drama. I made no remarks on the agreeable variety it introduced into the verſification and metre; nor ſhewed how, by uniting the harmony of the Lyre to the pomp of the Buſkin, muſic became intimately connected with it, and furniſhed

it with all its additional graces. Theſe and many other advantages I might have inſiſted upon, had I thought them ſo material as the two I mentioned; the latter of which, namely, its being a proper vehicle for moral and ſentiment, is ſo material, that I think nothing can poſſibly atone for the loſs of it.

In thoſe parts of the Drama, where the judgment of a mixt audience is moſt liable to be miſled by what paſſes before its view, the chief actors are generally too much agitated by the furious paſſions, or too much attached by the tender ones, to think coolly, and impreſs on the ſpectators a moral ſentiment properly. A Confidant or Servant has ſeldom ſenſe enough to do it, never dignity enough to make it regarded. Inſtead therefore of theſe, the Antients were provided with a band of diſtinguiſhed perſons, not merely capable of ſeeing and hearing, but of arguing, adviſing, and reflecting; from the leader of which a moral ſentiment never came unnaturally, but ſuitably and gracefully; and from the troop itſelf, a poetical flow of tender commiſeration, of religious ſupplication, or of virtuous triumph, was ever ready to heighten the pathos, to inſpire a reverential awe of the Deity, and to advance the cauſe of *honeſty* and of truth.

If you aſk me how it augmented the pathetic, I cannot give you a better anſwer than the *Abbé Vatry* has done in his diſſertation on the ſubject, publiſhed in the *Memoirs de l' Acad. des Inſcr. &c.* "It effected this (ſays he) both in its *odes* and *dialogue*. The "wonderful power of Muſic and the Dance is univerſally allowed. And, as theſe were always *accompaniments* to the Odes, there is no doubt but "they

“ they contributed greatly to move the paſſions. It was neceſſary that there ſhould be odes or intermedes, but it was alſo neceſſary that theſe intermedes ſhould not ſuffer the minds of the Audience to cool, but, on the contrary, ſhould ſupport and fortify thoſe paſſions which the previous ſcenes had already excited. Nothing imaginable could produce this effect better, than the choral ſongs and dances, which filled the mind with ideas correſponding to the ſubject, and never failed to add new force to the ſentiments of the principal perſonages. In the Dialogue alſo, the Chorus ſerved to move the paſſions, by ſhewing to the ſpectators other ſpectators ſtrongly affected by the action. A ſpectacle of ſuch a kind as is fitted to excite in us the paſſions of *Terror*, and *Pity*, will not of itſelf ſo ſtrongly affect us, as when we ſee others, alſo, affected by it. The painters have generally underſtood this ſecret, and have had recourſe to an expedient, ſimilar to that of the Chorus of the poets. Not content with the ſimple repreſentation of an hiſtorical event, they have alſo added groups of aſſiſtant figures, and expreſt in their faces the different paſſions, they would have their picture excite. Nay they ſometimes inliſt into their ſervice even irrational animals. In the *ſlaughter of the Innocents*, le Brun was not ſatisfied with expreſſing all the horror, of which the ſubject is naturally capable, he has alſo painted two horſes with their hair ſtanding on end, and ſtarting back, as afraid to trample upon the bleeding infants. This is an artifice which has often been employed, and which has always ſucceeded. A good poet

“ ſhould

" ſhould do the ſame; and Iphigenia ſhould not be
" ſuffered to appear on the Theatre, without being
" accompanied with perſons capable of feeling her
" misfortunes."

Had this ingenious Abbé ſeen the famous Belliſarius of Vandyke, I am apt to believe he would have thought it a much more noble illuſtration of the matter. The Soldier in that piece, though ſo much condemned by our modern profeſſors of *Vertú* for being, as they ſay, the principal Figure, is the very thing which raiſes this picture from a ſimple Portrait (which it muſt otherwiſe have been) to the fineſt moral painting; and in Greece would have placed the painter amongſt that claſs of Artiſts, which they eſteemed the nobleſt, the ΗΘΟΓΡΑΦΟΙ. The greateſt Tragic Poet could not have raiſed a more exquiſite diſtreſs than this judicious painter has done by the attitude of that Soldier; as well as by the ſubordinate figures, which, with great propriety, are female ones; nothing being ſo likely to raiſe in a military mind that mixture of pity and diſdain, which he wanted to expreſs, as to ſee ſuch a hero relieved by charity, and that too the charity of girls and old women.

But, returning to my ſubject, I will juſt obſerve to you, that if it be proper to aſſiſt an audience in reliſhing the pathetic, by ſhewing an imitation of that pathos in the Chorus, it is much more ſo to inſtruct them how to be affected properly, with the characters and actions which are repreſented in the courſe of the Drama. The character of Pierre in *Venice Preſerved*, when left entirely to the judgment of the audience, is perhaps one of the moſt impro-

per

per for public view, that ever was produced on any ſtage. It is almoſt impoſſible, but ſome part of the ſpectators ſhould go from the repreſentation with very falſe and immoral impreſſions. But had the Tragedy been written on the antient plan; had Pierre's character been drawn juſt as it is, and ſome few alterations made in Jaffier's, I know no two characters more capable of doing ſervice in a moral view, when juſtly animadverted upon by the Chorus. I don't ſay, I would have truſted Otway with the writing of it.

To have done, and to releaſe you. Bad characters become on this plan as harmleſs in the hands of the Poet, as the Hiſtorian; and good ones become infinitely more uſeful, by how much the Poetic is more forcible than the Hiſtorical mode of inſtruction.

LETTER V.

THE reaſon, why in a former Letter you adviſed me to alter the Chorus, is made very apparent in your laſt. For, by perſuading me to get the Odes ſet to muſic, and to riſk the Play on the ſtage, I underſtand only that you are willing, any how, to make it a more profitable work for me, than it can poſſibly be by means of the preſs alone.

Yet certainly, Sir, one ſingle reflection on our Britiſh pit will make you change your ſentiments effectually. Think only on the trial made by M. Racine, in a nation much before ours, in a taſte for probability and decorum in Theatrical diverſions. In

his two laſt Tragedies, you know, he has fully ſucceeded in the very thing I aimed at; and has adapted a noble imitation of ancient ſimplicity to the taſte of his own times: particularly in his *Athalia*, a poem in which the moſt ſuperb and auguſt ſpectacle, the moſt intereſting event, and the moſt ſublime flow of inſpired Poetry, and all nobly are naturally united. Yet I am told, that neither that, nor the *Eſther*, retains its Chorus, when repreſented on the French Theatre.

To what is this owing? To the refinement moſt certainly of our modern muſic. This art is now carried to ſuch a pitch of perfection, or if you will of corruption, which makes it utterly incapable of being an adjunct to Poetry. *Il y a grand apparence, que les progrès que vous avez faits dans la muſique, ont nui enfin à ceux de la veritable Tragedie. C'eſt un talent, qui a fait tort à un autre*; ſays M. Voltaire with his uſual taſte and judgment. Our different cadences, our diviſions, variations, repetitions, without which modern muſic cannot ſubſiſt, are entirely improper for the expreſſion of poetry, and were ſcarce known to the Antients.

But could this be managed, the additional expence neceſſarily attendant on ſuch a performance, would make the matter impracticable. This Mr. Dryden foreſaw long ago. The paſſage is curious.

" A new Theatre, much more ample and much
" deeper, muſt be made for that purpoſe; beſides
" the coſt of ſometimes forty or fifty habits: which
" is an expence too large to be ſupplied by a com-
" pany of actors. It is true, I ſhould not be ſorry
" to ſee a *Chorus* on a Theatre, more than as large

" and

"and as deep again as ours, built and adorned at a "King's charges; and on that condition, and ano-"ther, which is, that my hands were not bound be-"hind me, as now they are, I ſhould not deſpair "of making ſuch *a Tragedy* as might be both *in-*"*ſtructive* and *delightful* according to the manner "of the Grecians." What he means by having *his hands bound*, I imagine, is, that he was either engaged to his ſubſcribers for a Tranſlation of Virgil, or to the manager of the Theatre for ſo many plays a ſeaſon. This ſuffrage of Mr. Dryden is, however, very appoſite to the preſent point. It ſerves, alſo, to vindicate my deſign of imitating the Greek Drama. For if he, who was ſo prejudiced to the modern ſtage, as to think intrigue a capital beauty in it; if he, I ſay, owns that the grand ſecret *prodeſſe et delectare* was the characteriſtic of the Greek Drama only, nothing can better juſtify my preſent attempt than the approbation he gives to it in this paſſage.

Having now ſettled with you all matters of general criticiſm, I hope in your next you will give me your objections to *ſcenes*, *ſpeeches*, *images*, &c. And be aſſured I ſhall treat your judgment in theſe matters with greater deference, than I have done in what related to the Stage and the Chorus.

Pembroke Hall, 1751.

ILLUS-

ILLUSTRATIONS.

*ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page 130. v. 18.

On the left,

Reside the † sages skill'd in nature's lore:

† *i. e.* The Euvates; one of the three classes of the Druids, accordingto Am. Marcellinus. Studia liberalium doctrinarum inchoata per Bardos, Euvates, & Druidas. This class, Strabo tells us, had the care of the sacrifices, and studied natural philosophy; which here, by *the changeful universe*, is shewn to be on Pythagorean principles. Whenever the *Priests* are mentioned in the subsequent parts of the Drama, this order of men is intended to be meant, as distinguished from the Druids and Bards.

Page. 135 v. 11.

Thou shalt live;

Yet shalt thou live an interdicted wretch,

All rights of nature cancell'd.

Alluding to the Druidical power of excommunication, mentioned by Cæsar. Si quis aut privatus, aut publicus, eorum decreto non stetit, sacrificiis interdicunt. Hæc pœna apud eos est gravissima. Quibus

* The above quotations, from antient authors, are here thrown together, in order to support and explain some passages in the Drama of Caractacus, that respect the manners of the Druids; and which the general account of their customs, to be found in our histories of Britain, does not include.

Quibus ita eſt interdictum, ii numero impiorum ac ſceleratorum habentur——neque iis petentibus jus redditur, neque honos ullus communicatur. C. Comment. Lib. vi.

Page 137. v. 23.

Are the milk-white ſteers prepar'd?

In the minute deſcription which Pliny gives us of the ceremony of gathering the miſletoe, he tells us, they ſacrificed two white bulls. See Pliny's Natural Hiſtory, l. xvi. c. 44. which Drayton, in his Polyolbion, thus verſifies.

Sometimes within my ſhades in many an antient
 wood,
Whoſe often-twined tops great Phœbus' fires
 withſtood,
The fearleſs Britiſh prieſt, under an aged oak,
Taking a milk-white bull, unſtrained with the yoke,
And with an ax of gold, from that Jove-ſacred tree
The miſletoe cut down; then with a bended knee
On th'unhew'd altar laid, put to the hallow'd fires;
And whilſt in the ſharp flame the trembling fleſh
 expires,
As their ſtrong fury mov'd (when all the reſt adore)
Pronouncing their deſires the ſacrifice before
Up to th'eternal heav'n their bloodied hands did
 rear:
And whilſt the murm'ring woods ev'n ſhudder'd
 as with fear,
Preach'd to the beardleſs youth the ſoul's immor-
 tal ſtate;
To other bodies ſtill how it ſhould tranſmigrate,
That to contempt of death them ſtrongly did
 excite. Ninth Song.

Page

Page 138. v. 18.

Where our matron ſiſter dwells.

The exiſtence of female Druids ſeems aſcertained by Tacitus, in his deſcription of the final deſtruction of Mona by Paulinus Suetonius. Stabat pro litore diverſa acies denſa armis viriſque *intercurſantibus fœminis*, &c. Alſo by the known ſtory of Diocleſian, on which Fletcher formed a play, called the Propheteſs.

Page 138. v. 21.

And the potent adder-ſtone.

The ovùm anguinum, or ſerpent's egg: a famous Druidical amulet, thus circumſtantially deſcribed by Pliny.——Præterea eſt ovorum genus in magna Galliarum fama, omiſſum Græcis. Angues innumeri æſtate convoluti, ſalivis faucium corporumque ſpumis artifici complexu glomerantur; Anguinum appellatur. Druidæ ſibilis id dicunt in ſublime jactari, ſagoque oportere intercipi, ne tellurem attingat. Profugere raptorem equo, ſerpentes enim inſequi, donec arceantur, amnis alicujus interventu, &c. Nat. Hiſt. l. xxix. c. 3.

There are remains of this ſuperſtiton ſtill, both in the northern and weſtern parts of our iſland. For Lhwyd, the author of the Archeologia, writes thus to Rowland; ſee Mona Antiqua, p. 338. "The Druid doctrine about the *Glain Neidr*, ob-
" tains very much through all Scotland, as well
" lowlands as highlands; but there is not a word
" of it in this kingdom (Ireland); where, as there
" are no ſnakes, they could not propagate it. Be-
" ſides ſnake-ſtones, the highlanders have their
" ſnail-ſtones,

" ſnail-ſtones, paddock-ſtones, &c. to all which
" they attribute their ſeveral virtues, and wear
" them as amulets. And in another letter he
" writes, The Corniſh retain variety of charms, and
" have ſtill, towards the land's-end, the amulet of
" Maen Magal, and Glain Neidr, which latter they
" call a Milpreu, or Melpru, and have a charm
" for the ſnake to make it, when they have found
" one aſleep, and ſtruck a hazel wand in the centre
" of her ſpires."

Page 152. v. 18.

Have the milk-white ſteeds
Unrein'd, and, neighing, pranc'd with fav'ring ſteps.

The few and imperfect accounts antiquity gives us of ceremonies, &c. which are unqueſtionably Druidical, makes it neceſſary in this, and in other places of the Drama, to have recourſe to Tacitus's account of the Germans, amongſt whom, if there were really no eſtabliſhed Druids, there was certainly a great correſpondency, in religious opinions, with the Gauls and Britons. The paſſage here alluded to is taken from his 10th chapter. Proprium gentis, equorumque quoque præſagia ac monitus experiri. Publice aluntur iiſdem nemoribus ac lucis, candidi & nullo mortali opere contacti, quos preſſos ſacro curru, ſacerdos ac rex, vel principes civitatis comitantur, hinnitus & fremitus obſervant, nec ulli auſpicio major fides non ſolum apud plebem, ſed apud proceres, apud ſacerdotes.

Page 153. v 14.

Thou art a king, a ſov'reign o'er frail man ;
I am a Druid, ſervant of the gods,
Such ſervice is above ſuch ſovereignty.

The ſupreme authority of the Druids over their kings, is thus aſcertained by Dion Chryſoſtom. Κελτοὶ δὲ οὓς ὀνομάζουσι Δρυΐδας, καὶ τούτους περὶ Μαντικὴν ὄντας, καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν, ὧν ἄνευ, τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν οὐδὲν ἐξῆν πράττειν, οὐδὲ βουλεύεσθαι, ὥστε τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς ἐκείνους ἄρχειν, τοὺς δὲ βασιλέας, αὐτῶν ὑπηρέτας καὶ διακόνους γίγνεσθαι τῆς γνώμης, ἐν θρόνοις χρυσοῖς καθημένους, καὶ οἰκίας μεγάλας οἰκοῦντας, καί πολυτίμως εὐωχουμένους. Helmodus alſo de Slavis, l. ii. c. 12. aſſerts, Rex apud eos modicæ eſt æſtimationis in comparatione flaminis.

Page 154. v. 6.

The time ſhall come, when deſtiny and death
Thron'd in a burning car.

Strabo, and other writers, tell us, the Druids taught, that the world was finally to be deſtroyed by fire ; upon which this allegory is founded.

Page 161. v 1.

The gods, my brethren,
Have wak'd theſe doubts in the untainted breaſt
Of this mild maiden.

Ineſſe enim ſanctum quid & providum fœminis putant. Nec aut conſilia ipſorum aſpernantur, aut reſponſa negant. Tac. de morib. Germ. And Strabo

to

to the like purpose, l. vii. Ἄπαντες γὰρ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἀρχηγοὺς οἴονται τὰς γυναῖκας.

Page 165. v 14.

Behold yon huge
And unhewn sphere of living adamant.

This is meant to describe the rocking-stone, of which there are several still to be seen in Wales, Cornwall, and Derbyshire. They are universally supposed, by antiquarians, to be Druid monuments; and Mr. Toland thinks, "that the Druids made the "people believe that they only could move them, "and that by a miracle, by which they condemned "or acquitted the accused, and often brought cri-"minals to confess what could in no other way be "extorted from them." It was this conjecture which gave the hint for this piece of machinery. The reader may find a description of one of these rocking-stones in Camden's Britannia, in his account of Pembrokeshire; and also several in Borlase's history of Cornwall.

Page 190. v 8.

——And it's name
Trifingus.

The name of the inchanted sword in the Hervarer Saga.

Page 190. v 14.

By the bright circle of the golden sun.

This adjuration is taken from the literal form of the old Druidical oath, which they administered to their

their disciples; and which the learned Selden, in Prolog. de Diis Syr. gives us from Vettius Valens Antiochenus, l. vii. It is as follows: Τοὺς ταῖς παραγγελίαις ἡμῶν πειθομένους ὁρκίζω ΗΛΙΟΥ μὲν ἱερὸν κύκλον καὶ ΣΕΛΗΝΗΣ ἀνωμάλους δρόμους, τῶν τε λοιπῶν ΑΣΤΕΡΩΝ δυνάμεις καὶ κύκλον ΔΥΟΚΑΙΔΕΚΑ ΖΩΔΙΩΝ, ἐν ἀποκρύφοις ταῦτα ἔχειν, καὶ τοῖς ἀπαιδεύτοις ἢ ἀμυήτοις μὴ μεταδιδόναι, τιμήν τε καὶ μνήμην τῷ εἰσηγησαμένῳ ἀπονέμειν, &c.

Page 108. v 9.

Near each a white-rob'd Druid, whose stern voice
Thunder'd deep execrations on the foe.

This account is taken from what history tells us did really happen some years after, when the groves of Mona were destroyed by Suetonius Paulinus. Igitur Monam insulam incolis validam, & receptaculum perfugarum aggredi parat, navesque fabricatur plano alveo, adversus breve litus & incertum. Sic Pedes; equites vado secuti, aut altiores inter undas, adnantes equis transmisere. Stabat pro litore diversa acies densa armis virisque, intercursantibus fœminis: in modum Furiarum, veste ferali crinibus dejectis *faces* præferebant. Druidæ circum, preces diras sublatis ad cœlum manibus fundentes, novitate aspectus perculere milites ut quasi hærentibus membris, immobile corpus vulneribus præberent. Dein cohortationibus ducis, & se ipsi stimulantes ne muliebre & fanaticum agmen pavescerent, inferunt signa, sternuntque obvios & igni suo involvunt. Tac. Ann. l. xiv. c. 29.

M Page

Page 207. v 14.

These ſhapeleſs ſymbols of your barbarous gods.

The Druids did not really worſhip the divinity under any ſymbol. But this is put intentionally into the mouth of the Roman, as miſtaking the rude ſtones placed round the grove, for idols. Thus Lucan in his beautiful deſcription of a Druid grove,

———ſimulacraque mœſta deorum
Arte carent, cæſiſque extant informia truncis.
[illegible]s Rem[illegible] Phar. Lib. iii.

Some imagery from the ſaid deſcription is alſo borrowed in the opening of the Drama.

Page 211. v 24.

———Soldier, I had arms.

This paſſage, and ſome others in this ſcene, are taken from Caractacus's famous ſpeech in Tacitus, before the throne of Claudius; but here adapted to his dramatic character.

An

Though the two following poems are omitted in the London impreſſion of this work; yet, as they are confeſſedly written by Mr. Maſon, and were publiſhed in his name, the reader, it is preſumed, will not be diſpleaſed at finding them annexed to this edition, which the editors were deſirous of rendering as complete as poſſible.

AN ODE

Performed in the

Senate-Houſe at Cambridge, July 1, 1749,

At the Inſtallation of his Grace

THOMAS HOLLES Duke of NEWCASTLE,

CHANCELLOR of the Univerſity.

——canit errantem Permeſſi ad flumina Gallum
Aonas in montes ut duxerit una ſororum;
Utque viro Phœbi chorus aſſurrexerit omnis.

VIRG.

Set to Muſick by Mr. BOYCE, Compoſer to his Majeſty.

Recitative. HERE all thy active fires diffuſe,
Thou genuine Britiſh Muſe;
Hither deſcend from yonder orient ſky,
Cloth'd in thy heav'n-wove robe of harmony.

Air I. Come, imperial queen of ſong;
Come with all that free-born grace;
Which lifts thee from the ſervile throng,
Who meanly mimic thy majeſtic pace;
That glance of dignity divine,
Which ſpeaks thee of celeſtial line;
Proclaims thee inmate of the ſky,
Daughter of Jove and Liberty.

II.

Recitative. The elevated ſoul who feels
Thy awful impulſe, [illegible] fragrant ways
Of honeſt un[illegible] praiſe:
He with impartial juſtice deals
The blooming chaplets of immortal lays:
He flies above ambition's low career;
And nobly thron'd in Truth's meridian ſphere,
Thence with a bold and heav'n-directed aim,
Full on fair Virtue's ſhrine he pours the rays of fame.

III.

Air II. Goddeſs! thy piercing eye explores
The radiant range of Beauty's ſtores,
The ſteep aſcent of pine-clad hills,
The ſilver ſlope of falling rills,
Catches each lively-colour'd grace,
The crimſon of the wood-nymph's face,
The verdure of the velvet lawn,
The purple in the eaſtern dawn,
Or all thoſe tints, which rang'd in vivid glow
Mark the bold ſweep of the celeſtial bow.

IV.

Recit. But chief ſhe lifts her tuneful tranſports high,
When to her intellectual eye
The mental beauties riſe in moral dignity:

The

The ſacred zeal for Freedom's cauſe,
That fires the glowing Patriot's breaſt;
The honeſt pride that plumes the Hero's creſt,
When for his country's aid the ſteel he draws;
Or that, the calm, yet active heat,
With which mild Genius warms the ſage's heart,
To lift fair ſcience to a loftier ſeat,
Or ſtretch to ampler bounds the wide domain of art.

Air III. Theſe the beſt bloſſoms [illegible] the virtuous mind,
Sh[illegible] refin'd;
From th[illegible] bloom
With bee-like [illegible] draws the rich perfume,
And blends the ſweets they all convey,
In the ſoft balm of her mellifluous lay.

V.

Recit. Is there a clime, where all theſe beauties riſe
In one collected radiance to her eyes?
Is there a plain, whoſe genial ſoil enhales
Glory's invigorating gales,
Her brighteſt beams where emulation ſpreads,
Her kindlieſt dews where ſcience ſheds,
Wh[illegible] every ſtream of Genius flows,
Where ev'ry flower of Virtue glows?
Thither the Muſe exulting flies,
There [illegible] loudly cries——

Chorus I. All hail, all hail,
Majeſtic Granta! hail thy aweful name,
Dear to the Muſe, to Liberty, to Fame.

VI.

Recit. You too, illustrious Train, she greets
Who first in these inspiring seats
Caught the bright beams of that ætherial fire,
Which now sublimely prompts you to aspire
To deeds of noblest note: whether to shield
Your country's liberties, your country's laws;
Or in Religion's hallow'd cause
To hurl the shafts of reason, and to wield
Those heav'nly-temper'd arms, whose rapid force
Arrests base Falshood [illegible]ious course,
And drives rebellious Vic[illegible]ant from the field.

VII.

Air IV. And now she tunes her plausive song
To you her sage domestic throng;
Who here, at Learning's richest shrine,
Dispense to each ingenuous youth
The treasures of immortal Truth,
And open Wisdom's golden mine.

Recit. Each youth inspir'd by your persuasive art,
Clasps the dear form of virtue to his heart;
And feels in his transported soul
Enthusiastic raptures roll,
Gen'rous as those the sons of Cecrops caught
In hoar Lycæum's shades from Plato's fire-clad thought.

Air V. O Granta! on thy happy plain
Still may these Attic glories reign:
Still mayst thou keep thy wonted state,
In unaffected grandeur great;

Recit.

Recit. Great as this illuſtrious hour,
When he whom GEORGE's well-weigh'd choice
And Albion's general voice
Have lifted to the faireſt heights of pow'r,
When He appears, and deigns to ſhine
The leader of thy learned line;
And bids the verdure of thy olive bough
'Mid all its civic chaplets twine,
And add freſh glories to his honour'd brow.

IX.

Air VI. Ha[illegible]mply o'er his head
The gra[illegible] ſpread;
Mean while the M[illegible] ſhall ſnatch the trump of Fame,
And lift her ſwelling accents high,
To tell the world that PELHAM's name
Is dear to Learning as to Liberty.

Full Chorus. The Muſe ſhall ſnatch the trump of Fame,
And lift her ſwelling accents high,
To tell the world that PELHAM's name
Is dear to Learning as to Liberty.

I S I S:

An ELEGY.

Written in the Year 1748.

FAR from her h[illegible]w[illegible], where mildly bright
The pointed cryſtals ſhot their trembling light,
From dripping moſs where ſparkling dew-drops fell,
Where coral glow'd, where twin'd the wreathed ſhell,
Pale *Iſis* * lay; a willow's lowly ſhade
Spread its thin foliage o'er the penſive maid,
Clos'd was her eye, and from her heaving breaſt
In careleſs folds looſe flow'd her zoneleſs veſt;
While down her neck her vagrant treſſes flow
In all the awful negligence of woe;
Her urn ſuſtain'd her arm, that ſculptur'd vaſe
Where *Vulcan*'s art had laviſh'd all its grace;
Here full with life, was heav'n-taught *Science* ſeen,
Known by the laurel wreath and muſing mien:
There cloud-crown'd *Fame*, her *Peace* ſedate and bland,
Swell'd the loud trump, and wav'd the olive wand;
While ſolemn domes, arch'd ſhades, and viſtas green,
At well mark'd diſtance cloſe the ſacred ſcene.

On

* The principal river at Oxford.

On this the goddeſs caſt an anxious look,
Then dropt a tender tear, and thus ſhe ſpoke:
Yes, I cou'd once with pleas'd attention trace
The mimic charms of this prophetic vaſe;
Then lift my head, and with enraptur'd eyes
View on yon plain the real glories riſe.
Yes, *Iſis!* oft haſt thou rejoic'd to lead
Thy liquid treaſures o'er yon fav'rite mead;
Oft haſt thou ſtopt thy pearly car to gaze,
While ev'ry *Science* nurs'd it's growing bays;
While ev[illegible]y [illegible]th with [illegible]'s ſtrong impulſe fir'd
Preſt to the goal, [illegible] the goal untir'd,
Snatch'd each celeſtia[illegible]eath to bind his brow,
The *Muſes*, *Graces*, *Virtues* could beſtow.
E'en now fond *Fancy* leads th' ideal train,
And ranks her troops on *Mem'ry*'s ample plain;
See! the firm leaders of my patriot line,
See! *Sidney*, *Raleigh*, *Hampden*, *Somers* ſhine.
See *Hough*, ſuperior to a tyrant's doom,
Smile at the menace of the ſlave of *Rome*.
Each ſoul whom truth cou'd fire, or virtue move,
Each breaſt ſtrong panting with its country's love,
All, all appear; on me they grateful ſmile,
The well earn'd prize of every virtuous toil;
To me with filial reverence they bring,
And hang freſh trophies o'er my honour'd ſpring.
Ah! I remember well yon beachen ſpray,
There *Addiſon* firſt tun'd his poliſh'd lay;
'Twas there great *Cato*'s form firſt met his eye,
In all the pomp of free-born majeſty.
" My ſon, he cry'd, obſerve this mien with awe,
" In ſolemn lines the ſtrong reſemblance draw;

" The

" The piercing notes ſhall ſtrike each *Britiſh* ear,
" Each *Britiſh* eye ſhall drop the patriot tear;
" And rous'd to glory by the nervous ſtrain,
" Each youth ſhall ſpurn at *Slav'ry*'s abject reign,
" Shall guard with *Cato*'s zeal *Britannia*'s laws,
" And ſpeak, and act, and bleed in *Freedom*'s cauſe."
The hero ſpoke, the bard aſſenting bow'd,
The lay to *Liberty* and *Cato* flow'd*;
While *Echo*, as ſhe rov'd the vale along,
Join'd the ſtrong cadence of his *Roman* ſong.
But ah! *how Stillne*[illegible] ſlept upon the gr[illegible],
How mute *Attention* check[illegible] ing ſo[illegible]nd;
Scarce ſtole a breeze to w[illegible] leafy ſpray,
Scarce thrill'd ſweet *Philomel* her ſofteſt lay,
When *Locke* walk'd muſing forth; e'en now I view
Majeſtick *Wiſdom* thron'd upon his brow,
View *Candour* ſmile upon his modeſt cheek,
And from his eye all *Judgment*'s radiance break.
'Twas here the ſage his manly zeal expreſt,
Here ſtript vain *Falſhood* of her gaudy veſt;
Here *Truth*'s collected beams firſt fill'd his mind,
Ere long to burſt in bleſſings on mankind;
Ere long to ſhew to reaſon's purged eye,
That " *Nature's firſt beſt gift* w[illegible] *Liberty*."
Proud of this wond'rous ſon, ſublime I ſtood,
(While louder ſurges ſwell'd my rapid flood)
Then vain as *Niobe* *, ex[illegible]lting cry'd,
Iliſſus †! roll thy fam'd *Athenian* ti[illegible];

Tho'

* See the ſtory of Niobe, Hom. Il. 24, and Ov. Metam. B. 6.
† A river in Attica. See Stat. Theb. B. 4.

Tho *Plato*'s ſteps oft mark'd thy neighb'ring glade,
Tho' fair * *Lycæum* lent its awful ſhade,
Tho' ev'ry *academic* green impreſt
Its image full on thy reflecting breaſt,
Yet my pure ſtream ſhall boaſt as proud a name,
And *Britain's Iſis* flow with *Attic* fame.
Alas! how chang'd! where now that *Attic* boaſt?
See! *Gothic Licence* rage o'er all my coaſt.
See! *Hydra Faction* ſpread its impious reign,
Poiſon each breaſt, and madden ev'ry brain,
Hence, frontleſs crouds, that [illegible]ot content to fright
The bluſhing [illegible] her throne of night,
Blaſt the fair face of [illegible] madly bold,
To *Freedom*'s foes infernal orgies hold;
To *Freedom*'s foes, ah! ſee the goblet crown'd,
Here plauſive ſhouts to *Freedom*'s foes reſound;
The horrid notes my refluent waters daunt,
The *Echoes* groan, the *Dryads* quit their haunt;
Learning, that once to all diffus'd her beam,
Now ſheds by ſtealth a partial private gleam,
In ſome lone cloyſter's melancholy ſhade,
Where a firm few ſupport her ſickly head;
Deſpis'd, inſulted by the barb'rous train;
Who ſcour, like *Thracia*'s moon-ſtruck rout, the
[illegible];
Sworn foes, like them, to all the *Muſe* approves,
All *Phœbus* favours, or *Minerva* loves.
Are theſe the ſons my foſt'ring breaſt muſt rear?
Grac'd with my name, and nurtur'd by my care,
Muſt theſe go forth from my maternal hand
To deal their inſults thro' a peaceful land,

And

* Ariſtotle's ſchool near Athens.

And boaſt while *Freedom* bleeds, and *Virtue* groans;
That "*Iſis* taught rebellion to her ſons?"
Forbid it, heav'n! and let my riſing waves
Indignant ſwell, and whelm the recreant ſlaves,
In *England*'s cauſe their patriot floods employ,
As *Xanthus* * delug'd in the cauſe of *Troy*.
Is this deny'd? then point ſome ſecret way,
Where far, far hence theſe guiltleſs ſtreams may ſtray;
Some unknown channel lend, where nature ſpreads
Inglorious vales and un[illegible]ented mea[illegible];
There where a hind [illegible]ce [illegible] ruſtic ſtrain,
Where ſcarce a pilgrim trea[illegible]e pathleſs plain,
Content I'll flow; forget that e'er my tide
Saw yon majeſtick ſtructure crown its ſide;
Forget that e'er my wrapt attention hung
Or on the *Sage*'s or the *Poet*'s tongue:
Calm and reſign'd my humbler lot embrace,
And, pleas'd, prefer oblivion to diſgrace.

* The river Xanthus. See Hom. Il. 12 and 21.

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